

THE LONDON BIRD REPORT

NUMBER TWENTY-EIGHT

FOR

1963



Published October 1964 by

THE LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

PRICE: EIGHT SHILLINGS AND THREE PENCE

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THE LONDON BIRD REPORT

Number 28, 1963

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THE LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

THE LONDON BIRD REPORT

Edited by F. H. JONES

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P. A. D. HOLLON

Introduction

AFTER two years as Editor Leslie Baker resigned and the *London Bird Report* is this year again under the editorship of F. H. Jones, who will be known to many members since he was editor from 1953 to 1957. The recorders and the Records Committee remain unchanged. The gratitude of the Society and the Ornithological Section are extended to Leslie Baker for his services; he took over the editorship in circumstances of some difficulty and has given freely of his time and energy.

The outstanding feature of the year under review is, of course, the exceptional winter of early 1963, and while the work of collating, checking and writing up the records is too heavy to permit of any full assessment of its effects in this issue it is, of course, frequently referred to.

The Research Sub-Committee decided that two projects initiated in previous years should continue to have the full support of the Ornithological Section. The first, an enquiry into the bird life of rubbish tips conducted by A. Gibbs, has reached the writing up stage but is not so advanced that further information cannot be incorporated. The second, J. Gooders' investigation into the status of breeding birds in South West London has had some support but far from enough. In addition members have been asked to continue furnishing information on hirundine roosts to Robert Spencer of the British Trust for Ornithology. One new project received the Sub-Committee's support, this being a survey by T. W. Gladwin of the breeding colonies of both Sedge and Reed Warblers.

Of national enquiries, the British Trust for Ornithology's Census of Common Birds has been strongly recommended as being worthy of assistance and many of the Society's members are taking part but many more are needed. Members can be sure that not only is the census of the greatest value and importance, but it is one of the most interesting in which to take part. Participants stand to extend, very considerably, their knowledge both of bird song and breeding habits generally. The Nature Conservancy

investigation into the status of certain small birds of prey in these days when numbers of such species are declining at an alarming rate is also of the utmost importance, and arrangements are being made for our area to be fully covered and reported. It is regrettable that these enquiries do not receive more support from members, bearing in mind that the whole structure of ornithological knowledge in the Society's area is based upon the results of such investigations.

The Society's film "London Birds" continued to be successfully shown in London and the provinces.

A report by B. L. Sage on gull roosts in the Society's area appears on p. 63 and a further short account of the bird life of Holland Park by Miss E. P. Brown on p. 69. A note on the activities of Beddington Ringing Station and a book review also appear in this issue.

Members who are keen gardeners as well as those who have to look after a garden may be interested in a new publication entitled *Pest Control Without Poisons*. It has not been possible to give a review in this report, but the 64 page booklet gives information on the principal garden pests and recommends methods of control by pesticides which are not harmful to birds, or in many cases without the use of pesticides. It may be obtained from the Henry Doubleday Research Association, Bocking, Braintree, Essex, price 3s.

Shooting at Walthamstow Reservoirs

The control of indiscriminate shooting has for long been a difficult problem. The Metropolitan Water Board maintains a patrol and guard dogs at the Walthamstow Reservoirs but suggests that our members should at once report any shooting there to the duty watchman or to the police. The Secretary of the Ornithological Section would also like to be kept informed of any such incidents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Records Committee wishes to thank all those who have contributed to this Report and also to welcome new members to the Society. The Editor is most grateful to the members of the Editorial Committee and the Records Committee and especially Messrs. R. C. Homes, B. L. Sage and D. I. M. Wallace and Miss E. P. Brown who were responsible for much of the compilation of the systematic list and to the Recorders. He also wishes to thank Eric Hosking, F.R.P.S., for the loan of the photographs of Collared Dove and Woodlark, and D. I. M. Wallace for the cover drawing of a Snowy Owl.

Assistance in the exchange of records and information was given freely by the Editors of *British Birds*, D. D. Harber (Hon. Secretary to the B.B. Rarity Records Committee), the officers of the British Trust for Ornithology, the Essex Bird Watching and Preservation Society, the Hertfordshire Natural History Society, the Kent Ornithological Society, the Surrey Bird Club, the Zoological Society of London and the Committee on Bird Sanctuaries in the Royal Parks. Members also have to acknowledge many kindnesses from the Metropolitan Water Board, the London County Council and the Croydon Corporation.

The Year

THE SEVERE WINTER

The year 1963 will long be remembered for one of the severest winters on record, but as the cold weather began at the end of 1962, it will not be out of place to recapitulate some features of that period. Low temperatures were recorded from the night of December 22nd/23rd, and snow fell on the 26th. On the 24th 300 Lapwings were seen flying S.W. over Denham; on the 28th over 500 passed over Swanscombe Marshes in five flocks, and on the 29th four flocks over Chislehurst; of 1,500 at Rye Meads on the 27th, all had gone by the 29th. On the 26th there were 5,000 Snipe at Beddington S.F. Evidence of the movement of shore waders on December 28th included six Turnstones at Elmers End S.F. and three Purple Sandpipers at Staines Reservoirs. The same day a south-westerly passage of hundreds of Skylarks commenced, continuing until the end of the year. By the 29th, the flock of Pochard at Barn Elms had increased to over 1,000. A heavy fall of snow during the night 29th/30th no doubt prompted a westerly movement of grey geese noted at three localities on the 30th, and the year 1962 ended with further snowfalls.

Temperatures were well below freezing on the 1st of January and more snow fell on the 2nd. A slight thaw during daylight hours from the 4th to 6th did little to ameliorate the conditions. From the 7th onwards temperatures remained below freezing point all day and were particularly low from the 11th to the 15th and again from the 22nd to the 25th. More snow fell on the 20th. The severe weather continued throughout February and for the first three days of March, with day temperatures sometimes rising above freezing, and further moderate falls of snow from time to time.

Because of the regular monthly counts carried out in connection with the wildfowl census, changes in the population of ducks in the Area are better documented than for other common species. Barn Elms and Staines reservoirs were completely frozen from January 9th/10th to March 7th/8th and during much of this period King George V and Queen Mary reservoirs had little open water. However the new Queen Elizabeth II Reservoir proved to be less susceptible to freezing and was only completely ice-covered for a brief period towards the end of the severe weather. In addition one basin of Walton Res. was kept open deliberately for the greater part of the period, and the small reservoirs at Stoke Newington in a heavily built up area which were five-sixths frozen on the 19th January were more than half free of ice by 1st February. These ice-free reservoirs and the Thames provided a refuge not only for the normally high wintering population of duck but clearly attracted visitors driven from waters outside our Area. There had been about 9,000 duck at the time of the December, 1962 count before the onset of the severe weather. A large influx of Goosander occurred on the 5th, but it was not until the 13th during the

severest weather of the winter that the wildfowl census showed the duck population on the waters checked as 18,441, the highest ever recorded. This figure included 7,063 Mallard (highest ever) of which 3,630 were on the Thames between Putney and Teddington, 6,632 Tufted Duck (highest ever) of which 3,130 were on the new Queen Elizabeth II Res., and 2,814 Pochard (highest since 1947/48). The numbers of Goosander were by far the largest ever recorded, probably at least 1,000 towards the end of January, when 850+ flew in to roost at Queen Elizabeth II Res. on the 27th. Of the less common duck, the total of 106 Goldeneye on January 13th was also the highest yet recorded. The day before there had been 40 on the Thames between Kew and Richmond. Other ducks seen on the Thames in unusual numbers included Smew, 23 at Kingston on January 26th, Goosander, 139 between Walton and Chertsey on February 12th, and Tufted Duck, 650 between Barnes and Putney on January 8th. When the next wildfowl count was taken on February 17th the duck population had fallen by 3,000, but the number of dead birds found did not suggest that the reduction was due to heavy mortality. At the Thames marshes, which are not included in the wildfowl counts, the flock of 100+ Scaup at Stone on February 3rd was exceptional for our Area, and on the same day there was a noteworthy flock of 500+ Shelduck at Swanscombe. Eider appeared at two localities at the beginning of January, six brown birds at Sevenoaks on the 2nd, and a duck at Hilfield Park Res. on the 5th and 6th.

There were many records of Whooper and Bewick's Swans, some of which made prolonged stays in the Area, including four Whoopers at Ruxley gravel pit from January 22nd to March 2nd and four at Sevenoaks for almost exactly the same period, January 23rd to March 2nd. Seventeen Bewick's which arrived at Barn Elms on January 12th stayed in the vicinity until at least the 31st, and a single bird remained as late as April 12th. Parties of grey geese searching for open feeding areas were seen passing over on many occasions. Most of those specifically identified were White-fronted Geese, including the largest party of 200 at Uxbridge on January 16th, but Grey Lag, Bean and Pink-footed Geese were recognised. Seven Bean Geese remained at Queen Elizabeth II Res. from January 21st to 26th, and three Grey Lags at Barn Elms from January 5th to February 9th.

Turning to the other families of water birds we find that except for the scarce species, much less information is available. Of the six divers recorded at the beginning of the year, five died and one was found injured, but it was probably because they were in poor condition that they came inland. Great Crested Grebes were fewer in numbers than in 1962, and a high proportion seem to have taken to the Thames by early February; 400-500 were seen between Putney and Kingston on the 2nd, some obviously very weak. Although the number of dead birds found was not large, there were several reports of reduced numbers of breeding pairs and concentrations after the breeding season were smaller than usual. Information concerning the Little Grebe is less complete, but again there were several comments on reduced breeding stocks and no noteworthy post-breeding flocks were seen. Three Black-necked Grebes were seen during the period January 4th to 7th but none subsequently until mild

conditions returned. Slavonian Grebes visited Barn Elms and Sevenoaks about the same time, one was seen at Girling Res. on January 19th and 20th, and another remained on the River Wandle at Carshalton from January 28th to February 6th. In marked contrast to the previous winter, the only Shag recorded was at Walton Res. on February 10th. The wintering Cormorants appeared to be unaffected by the severe weather. A Little Gull was seen at Finsbury Park on January 3rd, and of two Iceland Gulls recorded, that at Panshanger Park on February 17th was the first definite record for Hertfordshire. A number of Coot were found dead, but apparently there was no marked change in the breeding population.

Mention has already been made in the *L.B.R.* for 1962 of a Spotted Crake and a Great Snipe near Denham on December 23rd. Several Spotted Crakes were present during the early part of the year in an area which did not freeze, and the largest number certainly identified was five in addition to two dead birds on March 24th. None was seen subsequently. The Great Snipe was reported on three dates up to February 23rd. The Heron has been declining in the London Area of recent years, and the frozen conditions caused a further severe set-back, the number of occupied nests falling to 95, probably the lowest total since 1900. With the extinction of the Little Parndon colony there are now only three heronries in the Area. One observer saw 17 herons at a small boating lake in Becontree on January 31st. Three Bitterns frozen out of their reed-beds were seen in January, one of which was found at a bus stop at Stoke Newington and taken to the London Zoo. One of the others was found dead a few days later, and two more dead birds were found in February and March.

A marked feature of the severe weather was the number of shore waders which appeared at sewage farms, reservoirs and by the Thames. The species seen were Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Grey Plover, Turnstone, Curlew, Redshank, Knot, Dunlin and Sanderling. Beddington sewage farm was one favoured locality with up to four Ringed Plover, 20 Curlew, 16 Redshank and six Dunlin. There were 3,000 Snipe there on January 6th, 2,000 less than on 26th December, 1962. The largest number of Jack Snipe was 47 at Elmers End sewage farm on January 13th. In spite of the arctic conditions one or two Little Stints wintered in the Thames estuary near the boundary of our Area in 1962/63, as they did in 1961/62, and Ruffs again wintered at Perry Oaks.

On the first day of the new year, there was a flock of 50 Linnets on the bombed sites at Cripplegate in the City, but it was not until the 5th that large-scale diurnal movements were noted, which continued on the 6th and 7th. On the 5th many Fieldfares and Redwings were moving south-west, including 1,600 Fieldfares and 700 Redwings in five hours at the Brent Reservoir and 1,000 and 300 respectively at Ruislip. It was clear that Song Thrushes were also on the move when 200 were seen at Beddington sewage farm on the 6th. Two days later the unprecedented number of 5,000 Redwings were concentrated there and 1,000 were still present on the 13th. Stonechats appeared at Beddington and Swanscombe on the 6th, but none were seen for the rest of the winter. No further large scale evacuations were noted, but local movements continued, and 3,000

Skylarks were concentrated at Beddington on January 23rd and 25th. Many birds took up residence in gardens. Prominent among these were Redwings which soon became accustomed to a varied diet of household scraps and proprietary bird foods, and in one garden at least put on considerable weight. Another species particularly numerous in gardens was the Greenfinch. The astonishing number of 295 individuals were trapped and ringed in one Esher garden from December 1962 to March 1963, and in a small garden at Highgate 53 were ringed in January and February. Unusual species noted visiting gardens were Brambling and Reed Bunting.

The passerine species which seem to have suffered most severely were the Wren and Goldcrest. In most of the outer areas the breeding population of the Wren was either greatly reduced or eliminated, but in the more heavily built up areas they probably survived much better, and in some areas were not reduced at all. Goldcrests were only reported from seven localities in the breeding season. Other species noticeably reduced in numbers were the Green Woodpecker, Long-tailed Tit, Song Thrush and Robin, and perhaps Barn Owl. Only two observers commented on a reduction in the number of Skylarks.

Unusual species seen included Shore Lark at Swanscombe on five dates from January 24th to March 9th, four Waxwings at Sidcup on January 29th, several Snow Buntings, four Twites at Rainham on January 6th and up to four at Swanscombe at the end of February and beginning of March. Small numbers of Crossbills were seen at six localities. Bramblings were widespread and common. Finally, just before the severe weather ended, an adult female Snowy Owl, the first ever seen in our Area, was discovered at Sewardstonebury on March 2nd and remained until the 28th.

SPRING MOVEMENTS AND THE BREEDING SEASON

On March 4th, the first really mild day of the year, there were 124 Smew at Walthamstow reservoirs, only one less than the highest gathering ever reported in our Area. Many, no doubt, had wintered outside our Area and were now beginning their return to the breeding grounds following the break in the severe weather. A return movement of Lapwings, most of which had left the Area in December, 1962, reached a peak on March 6th when small parties moving in a northerly direction were noted in many parts of the Area. Only three days later on the 9th, a day of strong southerly winds and heavy rainstorms, the first summer visitors, a Wheatear at Swanscombe and a Chiffchaff at Alderbourne, were seen. On this date the first Chiffchaffs were recorded at a number of places in Southern England, a remarkably early influx so soon after the end of the arctic conditions which had prevailed in much of Europe. However, there are still a few occurrences of winter visitors worthy of mention. A Long-tailed Duck was seen at Staines reservoir on March 11th. Siskins had been numerous at the beginning of the year, but the largest gathering was 150, perhaps 200, at Oxshott Woods on April 8th. A Rough-Legged Buzzard at Panshanger Park on April 15th was only the third satisfactorily identified in our Area since 1900. The last Siskin was seen on May 3rd, the last

Fieldfare the following day, and four Pink-footed Geese were seen flying north over Rye Meads on May 11th, a very late date.

The arrivals of summer visitors and passage migrants showed few features of particular note. An exceptionally early Tree Pipit was both seen and heard at Regent's Park on March 21st. Three Ring Ouzels were seen in April, and Hoopoes on April 23rd and May 27th. A widespread passage of Whinchats occurred in the first week of May, and a Quail was calling at Old Parkbury on May 10th. Perhaps the most interesting feature was the late passage of Black Terns which also occurred in other areas of Southern England and the South Midlands. In our Area the first was reported on May 26th, but the peak was from June 2nd to 4th when numbers rose to 30-40, all of which had gone on the 5th. The largest flock of Ringed Plover, 41, was present at Perry Oaks on the late date of June 3rd.

The reduction in the breeding population of certain species following the severe winter has already been mentioned. Declining species are the Sparrow-hawk, three pairs possibly bred or attempted to breed, Woodlark, only three pairs located, Grasshopper Warbler, Wood Warbler, Grey Wagtail and Red-backed Shrike. Other species with small breeding populations are the Gadwall, bred at Barn Elms, Shelduck, bred at Aveley and Swanscombe, and Whinchat, eight pairs bred. Three pairs of Black Redstarts managed to breed at the City bombed sites in spite of extensive building operations, and another three pairs bred away from Inner London. Several Common Terns summered in the Lea Valley, and a pair may have bred at a gravel pit at Cheshunt. Up to eight Ringed Plovers summered at Swanscombe, but there was no evidence of nesting. Kingfisher and Stonechat are lost breeding species. The most noteworthy increasing species is, as in many other parts of the country, the Collared Dove, and two pairs are known to have bred. There are probably still over 50 pairs of Kestrels; 30 pairs of Little Ringed Plovers summered; at least 90 cock Redstarts held territories. A drake and two duck Goosander remained throughout the summer at Staines reservoir, and an immature drake Goldeneye at Barn Elms Res. from April 23rd to at least July 15th. A Sand Martin caught at Sevenoaks on June 7th had been ringed at Figuig, Morocco, on April 5th.

AUTUMN MOVEMENTS AND BEGINNING OF THE WINTER

The autumn passage again began very early. The first Greenshank was seen on June 30th, Wood Sandpiper on July 6th and Ruff on the 8th. An early Little Gull seen at Staines Res. on July 15th. A most unusual record was of a family party of Pied Flycatchers at Golders Hill Park on July 16th. The first Black Terns were reported on July 21st. Three days later a Roseate Tern was identified at Barn Elms Res., the fourth record for the London Area since 1900. Stone Curlews were recorded at London Airport on July 29th and at Sevenoaks on the 31st, on which date a party of seven Garganey arrived at Barn Elms Res. The following day a Bittern flew S.W. over Dollis Hill. There had been records of Crossbills in each

of the first six months of the year, and from July onwards there was a further irruption into our Area, but on a much smaller scale than in 1962. The maximum for the year was 47 at Panshanger Park on September 7th.

By the second half of August the wader passage was building up. There were six Wood Sandpipers at Rainham on the 18th, 40 Ruffs at Perry Oaks on the 24th, and 235 Ringed Plover at Swanscombe on the 29th. The outstanding wader record of this period, however, was the Marsh Sandpiper, first for the London Area, which was identified at Swanscombe on August 26th and remained until at least September 3rd. At Swanscombe also, Common/Arctic Terns reached a peak of about 100 on August 30th. On the same day five parties of Black Terns totalling 108 made their way up the Thames at Swanscombe and that evening 38 arrived at Barn Elms at dusk. For the next week there were usually at least 30 in the Area, and 60 on September 3rd, but none were seen after the 17th. The beginning of September was also notable for a considerable influx of Curlew Sandpipers; 20 remained at Perry Oaks for the first three days of September, and there were 38 at Rainham on the 7th, but even these numbers were surpassed at Swanscombe where the maximum was 68 on September 9th. On September 7th a Kentish Plover was seen at Girling Reservoir and the adjacent Ponders End sewage farm. Sea birds reported during September included a Manx Shearwater at Staines on the 11th and 12th, a Leach's Petrel flying over Rye Meads on September 21st, an Arctic Skua at King George VI Res. on September 27th and 28th and on the latter date six Arctic Skuas flying S.W. over Sidcup. A Grey Phalarope visited the lake in Wanstead Park on September 14th.

A Montagu's Harrier flew over Regent's Park on August 29th and another harrier, either Hen or Montagu's, over Wormwood Scrubbs on September 5th. An Osprey was seen at Cheshunt Lock on September 3rd. The spectacular fall of night migrants on the East Coast at the end of August and early September coincided with the appearance of Pied Flycatchers at Holland Park and Regent's Park, and at the latter they were present until September 29th. In the second half of September two Tawny Pipits (second and third for the London Area) were seen at Perry Oaks, an immature from the 15th to the 18th and an adult on the 22nd. On the latter date a Bluethroat was identified at Beddington, only the fifth record for the Area. Hawfinches were particularly numerous in Epping Forest throughout September, the maximum being 62 on September 2nd. Two large roosts of hirundines built up in September; it was estimated that there were 10,000 Sand Martins at Ashford gravel pit on September 6th and 20,000 Swallows at Northfleet on September 22nd. The first Redwing was seen in Epping Forest as early as September 16th, twelve days before the first Fieldfare. A considerable influx of Jays took place in early October, particularly in Kent, where flocks of over 40 were seen at Foots Cray and Sundridge Park. Diurnal movements of Chaffinches were noted from October 8th to 25th, the maximum reported being 1,300 flying N.W. at Dollis Hill on the 18th. On October 25th a Corncrake was flushed by a dog at Addlestone. The last Swallows were seen on November 9th and 10th, the last Wheatear at Elmers End Sewage farm

as late as November 24th and the last Common/Arctic Tern at Staines on December 3rd.

By November 11th there were already 19 Goldeneye at Queen Mary Reservoir. The following day, a Purple Sandpiper was seen there, and another at Walthamstow Reservoir on the 17th. The same day a Snow Bunting appeared at Rainham, and there had been one at King George V Reservoir the day before. A Long-tailed Duck stayed at Queen Mary Reservoir from November 20th to 26th. A Great Northern Diver at Ruxley on November 24th still retained some summer plumage. Scarce winter visitors reported during December were a Waxwing at Ruxley on the 1st, a Shore Lark at Swanscombe on the 8th, a Great Grey Shrike in Epping Forest and a Bearded Tit at Berwick Pond on the 13th, a Snow Bunting at Barn Elms on the 24th and a Bittern at Ruxley on the 29th. Three Chiffchaffs were seen during the month. Following several very cold days with severe frosts at night, a heavy and widespread passage of Lapwings to the south west developed on the morning of the 24th on a bigger scale than in 1962 at the beginning of the severe weather. But those conditions were fortunately not repeated, and the year ended with mild weather prevailing.

Contributors to the Systematic List

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
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| Miss B. M. Hawes | A. R. Lansdown | Mrs. A. E. Parsons |
| A. F. Hawkes | J. R. Laundon | R. E. F. Peal |
| R. W. Hayman | Y. Laver | Mrs. E. Peal |
| G. I. W. Hemmings | J. G. Levene | R. W. Peters |
| M. A. Hemmings | A. R. Lifford (ARLd) | B. P. Pickess |
| R. Henderson | J. Lines | Mrs. B. Poloniecka |
| D. Herdson (DHn) | Dr. L. Lloyd-Evans | R. F. Porter |
| H. M. Hill | (LL-E) | H. E. Pounds |
| P. J. M. Hill | T. Lloyd-Evans (TL-E) | Dr. R. Pritchard |
| A. J. Holcombe | C. M. Lock | Dr. A. D. Prowse |
| P. A. D. Hollom | P. B. Lowe | A. Quinn |
| F. J. Holroyde | M. J. Lowing | E. C. Reeves |
| R. C. Homes | H. J. Mackett | F. C. Reeves |
| C. D. Honer | I. B. McWilton | E. W. Reuthe |
| J. R. Hopkins | J. D. Magee | R. G. Rigden |
| B. Hornygold | I. G. Manklow | F. Riley |
| J. A. Hudson | T. Marchington | J. N. Roberts |
| F. J. Hulbert (FJHt) | B. A. Marsh | L. Roberts |
| G. J. Hull | J. V. Marsh | Mrs. W. Roberts |
| R. J. Hunt | J. Martin | J. C. M. Robertson |
| H. F. Hurford | B. S. Meadows (BSMs) | J. A. Rose |
| M. P. Ingram | W. D. Melliush | Miss J. Rushton |
| W. R. Ingram | P. Meredith | I. J. Russell |
| J. Jack | F. Metcalf | Rye Meads Ringing |
| E. James | E. Milne-Redhead | Group |
| T. James | (EM-R) | B. L. Sage |
| A. R. Jenkins | D. J. Montier | R. F. Sanderson |
| J. A. Jobling | K. Morris | Miss E. Sartoris (ESs) |
| I. G. Johnson | C. G. Munday | R. L. Savory |
| C. D. Joll | M. Munro | J. A. Sayer |
| E. C. A. Jones | D. D. Murray | E. Seabrook (ESk) |
| F. H. Jones | D. F. Musson | H. L. Settle |
| K. R. Jones | B. S. Nau | D. Shepherd |
| D. Joslin | P. F. Nickols | W. S. Shipp |
| C. Kearton | K. Noble | A. P. Shorter (APsr) |
| A. S. Keith | M. E. Nolan | H. J. A. Side |
| B. Kemp | B. V. M. O'Brien | A. P. Simes |
| J. Kendall | M. Ogle | L. M. Simmonds |
| Miss L. Kennedy | C. Ogston | E. Simms |
| J. de R. Kent | P. J. Oliver | T. R. Smeeton |
| Kent Ornithological | A. E. Olsen-Shave | J. T. Smith |
| Society | (AEO-S) | Dr. W. E. Snell |
| R. H. Kettle | A. Paine | <i>continued on page 81</i> |

Birds of the London Area, 1963

A REPORT OF THE BIRD LIFE WITHIN TWENTY MILES OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

THIS report follows the British Ornithologists' Union's "Check-List of the Birds of Great Britain and Ireland" (1952) based on the Wetmore classification, and the numbers preceding each species refer to that List where the full scientific name will be found. The vernacular names are those adopted by the Editors of *British Birds* magazine as announced in January, 1953 (*B.B.*, 46: 1).

All records are for 1963 except where otherwise stated. The initials following each record refer to the observer(s) responsible for it, whose name(s) may be obtained by reference to the list of contributors on page 10.

The six counties within the circle of twenty miles radius are indicated by their initials, *viz.*:—E = Essex; H = Herts.; M = Middlesex; B = Bucks; K = Kent; S = Surrey. Several of the Lea Valley reservoirs are partly in Middlesex, but all records referring to them are published under Essex, following the policy adopted by W. E. Glegg in his histories of the birds of Essex (1929) and Middlesex (1935). The following abbreviations are also used:—*B.B.* = *British Birds* magazine; *E.B.R.* = *Essex Bird Report*; *L.B.R.* = *London Bird Report*; G.P. = gravel pit; Res. = reservoir; S.F. = sewage farm; N., E., S., and W., are used for the cardinal points of the compass, but are intended only to indicate the general direction of flight; mo = many observers.

An open map of the London Area will be found useful for a full appreciation of many of the records. As the history of some of the species is intended to be continuous, reference to the Society's book *The Birds of the London Area since 1900*, first published in 1957 and reprinted with a supplementary chapter in 1964, and to the systematic list of previous issues of the *L.B.R.* is recommended.

Queen Elizabeth II Res., mentioned in this Report, is the reservoir hitherto known as Walton South.

1 Black-throated Diver

E Girling Res., an immature found dead on Jan. 19th (JCE, JF, BSMs, RFS).

2 Great Northern Diver

K Ruxley, one still in partial summer plumage on Nov. 24th (CHD, FJH)

4 Red-throated Diver

E Girling Res., a dead bird on Jan. 20th, and a second, still alive that day, was found dead on Feb. 2nd (JF, BSMs, RFS). Romford, one found in Hylands Park on Jan. 31st died the same day (KGF).

Walthamstow Res., dead birds seen on Jan. 17th and 18th and on Mar. 14th (PFB); it is not clear whether the January and March records refer to the same bird.

K Westerham, one found injured on Feb. 2nd (JGH).

5 Great Crested Grebe

There were fewer grebes at the beginning of the year than in 1962 when there had been 600 at Staines alone on Jan. 4th. This year there were 658 in all on the wildfowl count waters on Jan. 13th, including 158+ at Girling Res., Essex, 106 at King George VI Res., Middx., and 375 at Queen Elizabeth II Res., Surrey. By this time Barn Elms and Staines reservoirs were already frozen over. By Jan. 26th only about 10 remained at Queen Elizabeth II Res., where seven were found dead, and 25 had already taken to the Thames between Chertsey and Staines. By the following day there were none on the reservoir but about 110 on the river by Teddington Lock (GIWH, MAH) and 70+ opposite Syon Park (AVF). On the 25th one had landed in a storm tank at Elmers End S.F. and died after fouling its plumage and hitting the concrete side when it tried to take off (PM). By Feb. 1st there were 200 on the Thames between Kingston and Richmond, some resting on the bank and obviously very weak (SG), and on the 2nd 400-500 were seen between Putney and Kingston (AJC). It would seem that they must have been too weak to leave the Area entirely and 22 were known to have died in the Lea valley (RFS). Comparative figures in the following breeding season are not very extensive, but at Walthamstow Res. there were seven pairs (12 in 1962), at the gravel pits north of Sevenoaks 3-4 pairs (12) and at Gatton Park one pair (normally 2-3). In the later months of 1963 about 400 were present at the wildfowl count sites in mid-October and mid-November, the largest concentrations being of only 200 at Queen Mary Res. on Oct. 13th and Dec. 8th and about the same number at Staines Res. on Dec. 22nd.

6 Red-necked Grebe

E Girling Res., one on July 27th (JF).

H Rye Meads, one on Oct. 24th (RDn, LL-E).

M Queen Mary Res., one from Sept. 28th to the end of the year (JBC *et al.*).

7 Slavonian Grebe

E Girling Res., one Jan. 19th and 20th (JF, JCE, BSMS, RFS). Walthamstow Res., one found dead on Feb. 27th may have been the bird seen on Dec. 31st 1962 (see *L.B.R.* No. 27), as the reservoir was frozen from Jan. 10th to Feb. 27th (RFS).

K Sevenoaks, one Jan. 3rd, two on the 4th and one on the 6th; one on Dec. 17th (JGH, JMH).

S Barn Elms Res., one Jan. 5th to 9th (mo). Carshalton, one on the river Wandle from Jan. 28th to Feb. 6th (MJC, MJCd).

8 Black-necked Grebe

- E Girling Res., single birds on Jan. 4th and 6th, and from Apr. 27th to May 12th; up to three from Aug. 3rd to Dec. 14th (JCE, JF). King George V Res., three on Nov. 30th (JF). Rainham, one at Berwick Pond on Nov. 13th (MJA).
- M Queen Mary Res., one on Jan. 5th (RSB); two on Sept. 8th and one on Oct. 27th (SG). King George VI Res., one in summer plumage on July 16th (JBC). Staines Res., one on Mar. 10th (LB); one from Aug. 4th, and up to three from Aug. 31st to Oct. 6th, but five on Sept. 4th (mo).
- S Barn Elms Res., one on Jan. 5th and 7th (DCG, MDK, PJSn). Queen Elizabeth II Res., one on Sept. 15th (JdeRK).

9 Little Grebe

The numbers reported, following the severe weather early in the year, were much lower than in recent years. Records of breeding pairs at fifteen are clearly incomplete, but no noteworthy flocks were reported, the maximum being eighteen at Stone, Kent, on Dec. 8th (CHD).

12 Leach's Petrel

- H Rye Meads, one flew N. over one of the lagoons during the afternoon of Sept. 21st (TL-E, BSN, GW).

16 Manx Shearwater

- M Staines Res., one Sept. 11th and 12th (JBC, CDH).
See short note on page 81.

28 Cormorant

Numbers in the main wintering area, the Thames and adjacent Middx. and Surrey reservoirs from Kew to Staines, showed little change from recent years. The maxima were 70 at Syon Park, Middx., on Feb. 2nd (AJC), and 70 at Queen Elizabeth II Res., Surrey, on Feb. 16th (MC). Most birds had left by mid-April and there were no records from May 14th to July 19th. At the end of the year, numbers did not begin to build up until the end of November and the maximum was 31 on Dec. 19th and 27th at Queen Elizabeth II Res. (WRI). There were six records of from one to four flying over Inner London.

29 Shag

One record only, of a single bird at Walton Res., Surrey, on Feb. 10th (MJC, PJO), in marked contrast to the previous winter (see *L.B.R.* No. 27).

30 Heron

Following the severe winter, the number of occupied nests fell to 95, probably the lowest number since 1900, and only half the average for the ten years 1950 to 1959 when the population was at its highest level. There were records from the Inner London parks for every month of the year, the visits to Regent's Park being particularly regular. The number of occupied nests is given below:

- E Little Parndon, none; this heronry was colonized in 1945, but the site is now within the boundaries of Harlow New Town, one of the neighbourhoods of which is named Heronswood. Walthamstow Res., 34 occupied nests (AG).
- M Kempton Park, 49 occupied nests (EMG).
- S Gatton Park, 12 occupied nests (HB).

38 Bittern

- H Cheshunt, one found dead on Mar. 13th (RAB, JJW). Rye Meads, one on Jan. 5th (RDn, BSN, GFW). Watford, one, seen from Jan. 19th to 22nd, was found dead a week later (JDM).
- M Dollis Hill, one flying S.W. on Aug. 1st (ES). Stoke Newington, one, found at a bus stop, was sent to the London Zoo on Jan. 17th (*Evening News*).
- K Erith Marsh, one found dead on Feb. 11th was in an advanced state of decomposition (RGR). Ruxley G.P., one on Dec. 29th (PWB).

DUCKS

The winter of 1962-63 broke many records for its severity and prolonged freeze-up, and not surprisingly it broke a good many ornithological records as well. It may be helpful, therefore, to say something about the conditions on the reservoirs, which were carefully recorded by S. Greenwood. Barn Elms and Staines reservoirs were completely frozen over from January 9th-10th to March 7th-8th. During much of this time King George V and Queen Mary reservoirs also had little open water. Stoke Newington reservoirs had very little ice before January 12th but were five-sixths frozen on the 19th; they opened up a little by February 1st when there was three-fifths ice cover, of which little, however, remained by the 27th. As always under these conditions many ducks moved to the river and to Walton reservoirs which are usually the last to freeze. On this occasion they also concentrated at Stoke Newington where there was a huge increase of diving ducks between February 1st and 8th. Walton reservoirs were not frozen on January 6th but on the 13th there were only two very small patches open. On February 2nd the eastern basin had rather under a quarter of the surface open, but the ice on the western basin had been largely broken up deliberately and only about a quarter of the surface was still covered. A week later and for the ensuing month the whole of the western basin was kept open. The last time when there were similar conditions Queen Elizabeth II Reservoir did not exist but now it introduced a new factor, as it proved to be much less susceptible to freezing than the older reservoirs. On January 13th it was clear, and it was only completely frozen over for a brief period towards the end of the great frost.

These reservoirs, situated close together, attracted a substantial proportion of the diving ducks of the Area, and the ice conditions explain many of the figures given under the individual species, where details

of the many exceptional concentrations will be found. Here we may mention that on the various waters included in the monthly wildfowl counts the total number of ducks rose from a little over nine thousand in November and December, 1962, to the unprecedented number of 18,441 on January 13th and 15,441 on February 17th, 1963. It is not so long since we were thinking in terms of a peak of 10,000, but in 1963-64 numbers were again well over this level. On December 15th, 1963, there were 12,115 and on January 12th, 1964, no fewer than 14,215, a very high number for a winter which was not unduly severe.

Summaries based on the wildfowl counts are given in heavy type as usual, though the customary warning must be added that the localities concerned listed in some previous reports and in *The Birds of the London Area*, are selected ones. They embrace all the important reservoirs, except Hilfield Park, but do not include many of the parks, the big series of gravel pits in the Lea and Colne valleys or the Stone and Swanscombe marshes in the lower reaches of the Thames.

Mandarin

- E Walthamstow, a pair on the River Lea throughout June (JAS).
- M Single males in Breconfield Park (FJL), Kenwood and Waterlow Park (RCB) outside the breeding season.
- K Beckenham, a pair throughout the autumn (AWB). Ruxley G.P., a male on Jan. 23rd and 26th (KHP). Sevenoaks, one on Apr. 28th and Sept. 15th and a pair in November (KOS).
- S Addlestone, a duck with five ducklings on June 9th and 23rd (GHG). Leatherhead, two on Apr. 7th and 12th, and a pair flying N.W. on May 19th (TB). Painshill Park, seven drakes on May 12th, "has bred and probably still does" (DP). Weybridge, a pair on the River Wey on May 11th (GHG). Wimbledon Park Lake, a male during April and on May 5th (JG, GC). A few other records outside the breeding season including several parts of the Thames from Kew to Staines.

45 Mallard

In the *L.B.R.* for 1962 the Mallard population for October to December, 1962, was described as about 11 per cent down on the average of the acceptable counts for this period in the previous five winters. For the whole winter of 1962-63 the average for the period November-February, previously taken as the guide to winter population, was 5,313 compared with 5,723 in 1961-62, a drop of about 7 per cent. In January, after the onset of the cold weather, the total was 7,063, the highest figure yet recorded; if this is excluded the monthly totals were remarkably consistent between 4,688 and 4,762, and then averaged 17 per cent less than in 1961-62,

In the winter of 1963-64 there was no large mid-winter influx of Mallard and the November-February figures were very stable, rising 10 per cent from October to December, dropping back again by the same amount in January and remaining at this level in February. The average shows a further drop of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on 1962-63, but if the exceptional January figure in 1963 is excluded they would show a rise of 7 per cent. This is still below the level of the winters 1956-57 to 1961-62, but does suggest that the population may be recovering.

There were 60+ right in London between Southwark and Blackfriars Bridges on Jan. 2nd, 1963, and unusual numbers for the Inner London reaches of the Thames remained into February. The biggest concentrations during the prolonged frost in the early months of the year were on the Thames further up. On Jan. 13th there were 3,630 Mallard between Putney and Teddington, more than half the total counted. For comparison, the highest total for this stretch of the river in 1963-64 was 2,506 on Nov. 17th. As in 1962 there were also large numbers in October on waters not included in the above summary, e.g. 700 at Broxbourne on Oct. 19th and 586 at Hilfield Park Res. on the 20th.

46 Teal

The increased numbers of wintering Teal noticed in the winter of 1961-62 were maintained in 1962-63 and 1963-64 at a very similar level, though the peak numbers in 1962 came in November. There were unusual numbers on the lower Thames in the cold spell, which are not included in the London wildfowl summaries, and details of these and of all flocks of 300 or over are given with other interesting records—

- E Ripple Level, Barking, 250 on Feb. 11th and 173 on Sept. 21st. Aveley Marsh, a drake on June 12th.
- M King George VI Res., 405 on Jan. 13th and 415 on Dec. 15th. A pair on June 8th.
- K Swanscombe, 300 at end of February and in early March.
- S Barn Elms Res., 365 on Jan. 27th, 300 on Mar. 3rd and 300 on Dec. 15th. From one to three drakes in June. River Thames, c. 250 at Chiswick during the cold weather.

47 Garganey

- E Nazeing Meads G.P., one on Sept. 29th (JCE).
- H Hilfield Park Res., one on Aug. 13th (BLS) and four on the 18th (DT).
- M Brent Res., one on Aug. 31st (CGM). Perry Oaks S.F., one from Aug. 17th to 28th (MEN, AQ *et al.*).
- K Swanscombe, one on Aug. 8th (CEW).
- S Barn Elms Res., seven on July 31st (MDK).

49 Gadwall

- E Girling Res., two ducks on Jan. 13th and one on 20th, and two or three birds on Feb. 2nd (JF, BSMs *et al.*). Walthamstow Res., a duck on July 19th (RFP).
- H Hilfield Park Res., one on four dates September-November and two on Dec. 14th and 15th (BLS). Old Parkbury G.P., three on Nov. 3rd (EHW).
- M Brent Res., one to two Aug. 29th and 31st, Sept. 18th and 19th and Nov. 27th (LAB, EHW). King George VI Res., a drake on Nov. 17th (SG). Staines Res., a pair on several dates in March and mid-April, a drake from then to the end of May, a duck on May 13th and 18th, a drake and five ducks on June 8th and a duck on Sept. 11th. No evidence of breeding was obtained. Single birds seen once only at Queen Mary Res., in Waterlow Park and on the River Crane at Twickenham.
- K Sevenoaks, one on Jan. 7th and 16th (*KOS Bull.*).
- S Barn Elms Res. and adjacent stretches of the Thames, maximum numbers 19 on Feb. 4th between Putney and Mortlake (MJCD) and 23 on Dec. 5th off Fulham (PJSN). At Barn Elms a pair with five juveniles two-thirds grown were seen on July 31st. Beddington S.F., a duck on Apr. 21st (SDT). Fetcham Mill Pond, a duck on Jan. 1st and 6th (TB, MJC, TM). Walton Res., a pair on Jan. 13th and 22nd and a duck found dead on the 30th (WRI, PJO). Richmond Park, a drake on Mar. 24th (IRB) and Aug. 20th (BAM).

50 Wigeon

In the winter of 1962-63 the highest total in the wildfowl counts was 296 in February, only just over half the number in the same month for the previous two years. In the following winter the peak dropped again, to 167, and the winter average to about half the level of 1960-61 and 1961-2.

During the prolonged frost when wildfowl were on the move, Wigeon reached *c.* 100 at Barn Elms on Jan. 4th (JG) and later up to 60 were seen on nearby stretches of the Thames. Further down the river, at localities not included in the wildfowl counts summarized above, there were 180 at Rainham, Essex, on Feb. 11th (KB) and 50 at Stone on Feb. 3rd (AW). On the reservoirs the largest party was one of 201 at Staines on Feb. 17th. An unusual record was of one on Carshalton Village Pond on Jan. 1st (JAR).

52 Pintail

- E Girling Res., two on Mar. 3rd (JF). Fishers Green G.P., two on Apr. 7th (JCE); seven on Dec. 27th (BSMs). Ilford, one in Valentine's Park on Feb. 15th (BEB). Rainham Marsh, unusual numbers in the hard weather, 23 on Jan. 27th, up to 20 in Feb. (AFH) and nine on Mar. 6th; one on Aug. 2nd (KB). Walthamstow Res., one found shot on Feb. 25th (RFS). Wanstead Park, two on Oct. 10th (JAS).

- H Hilfield Park Res., a pair on Mar. 23rd and a drake on Nov. 5th (ASK). Panshanger Park, a drake on Nov. 24th (BLS).
- M Up to three seen at the reservoirs Jan.-Mar. (m.o.) and four at Queen Mary Res. on Dec. 1st (AQ).
- K Ruxley G.P., a duck on Sept. 14th (KHP). Sevenoaks, one in Feb. and Mar. and a drake Dec. 24th-27th (*KOS Bull.*). Stone Marshes, three in a frozen field on Feb. 24th (KHP). Swanscombe, one on Mar. 1st (DIMW), and three on Dec. 25th (RVW).
- S Barn Elms Res., six on Jan. 5th-6th (RWG, TRS), then up to four until the 12th when 14 flew over (MDK). River Thames, one to three on various dates from Jan. 15th to Feb. 24th in the Kew area.

53 Shoveler

The largest flocks were *c.* 100 at Queen Mary Res. on Jan. 9th (BEC) and *c.* 110 on Oct. 11th (RFP). Otherwise numbers tended to be low both early and late in the year. There were very few records in the breeding season and no proof of nesting.

54 Red-crested Pochard

- E Girling Res., a pair on Sept. 25th (JCE). Nazeing G.P., a duck on Aug. 19th (RAB). Valentine's Park, one on Jan. 8th-9th (JM). Walthamstow Res., a duck on Aug. 13th (RFS).
- M Stoke Newington Res., three drakes from Aug. 31st to end Sept. (JHB, RAD). Inner London: St. James's Park, a duck took off with other diving ducks during late afternoon of Mar. 13th and after circling several times flew off eastwards at height (DFM).
- S Barn Elms Res., a duck on Jan. 9th-10th (RSB, MJCd), and one on the Thames on the 26th (SG).

The usual proviso must be made that these were probably full-winged birds from the London Parks, and the record from St. James's Park is included to show the possibilities. The occurrences in January, however, are interesting in view of the influx of diving ducks during the hard weather at this time.

55 Scaup

The small numbers of Scaup that arrived in early January were not exceptional for such a winter but a large flock in the estuary was. While several hundred do appear under these conditions in the Cliffe area, beyond Gravesend, there is no previous parallel for as many as a hundred as far up the river as Stone, inside our Area.

- E Girling Res., three from Jan. 19th to Feb. 11th, but four on Jan. 23rd (JF, PFB *et al.*). Walthamstow Res., one on various dates from Jan. 5th to Mar. 28th (JF, PFB).
- H Rye Meads, one on Jan. 6th and 19th, two on Feb. 3rd and three on Nov. 7th and 9th (RMRG). Watford, five on Jan. 24th on the River Gade in Cassiobury Park, "the only open water for miles around" (JDM).

- M Brent Res., one on Jan. 4th-7th (LAB, MDK, DT). Brentford, a pair on Mar. 28th-29th (CAW). Hampton Res., two drakes on Feb. 17th (EMG). Queen Mary Res., one on Jan. 9th (BEC). Staines Res., one on June 30th (JBC), Nov. 3rd (BVMO) and 19th (AJC). Stoke Newington Res., one on Feb. 11th and Mar. 2nd (JF).
- K Stone, 100+ on Feb. 3rd (AW). Swanscombe, one on Jan. 26th and also one dead (CEW).
- S On the Surrey reservoirs and adjoining stretches of the Thames the first one appeared on Jan. 2nd; at Barn Elms there were four on the 5th, also seen on the river, six on the 9th and up to two there or on the river up to Mar. 23rd. At Walton Res. there were two on Jan. 5th, three on the 6th, six on the 20th and up to four until Mar. 11 (mo). Outside this area there was a duck on the River Wandle at Carshalton from Feb. 8th-12th (MJCD), and in Inner London, two on the Thames at Westminster on Jan. 31st and one from Feb. 1st to Mar. 1st (DFM, PJSn).
In the latter part of the year: Barn Elms, one on Oct. 13th (JG) and Dec. 15th and 21st (MDK, PJSn). Lonsdale Rd. Res., one on Dec. 15th (JG).

56 Tufted Duck

From the winter of 1950-51 at least the average wintering population of Tufted Ducks showed a steady rise, with very few breaks, from a level of about 2,000 to nearly 4,000. This was followed by a very marked drop in 1960-61, when the figures were not extensive enough to average but appeared to be of the order of 2,300. In 1961-62 there was a recovery to nearly 3,000 but in 1962-63, after abnormally low numbers in December, there was a tremendous influx in January producing a total of 6,632, which remained fairly constant into February when there were 6,535. The average for the winter was 4,399, both this and the January total being the highest recorded in the whole series of counts, though it should be remembered that in 1946-47 before the counts were resumed after the war there were also very large numbers. Figures for 1963-64 are not complete, but suggest that the average was still very high.

Breeding season records:—

- E Fishers Green G.P., one pair bred (JCE). Nazeing G.P., eight pairs present and several broods seen (BSMs). Walthamstow Res., 11 pairs of which six bred (JF, RFS).
- H Helicon G.P., one pair bred (IGJ). Maple Cross, five pairs bred (BPP). Old Parkbury, four pairs on May 12th but no evidence of breeding (EHW).
- M Gunnersbury Park, three pairs (PMS). Stain Hill Res., *c.* eight pairs on June 29th (WRI). Stoke Newington Res., three pairs bred (DIMW). Inner London, duck with two small young on the Thames off the Tate Gallery on June 6th (GHG).

- K Sutton at Hone G.P.'s, ten broods with 56 young on July 12th and three more broods on Aug. 27th (CHD).
- S Barn Elms Res., eight to nine ducks with broods (SG, JMS). Clapham Common, one pair raised nine young of which six survived (MB, JG). Gatton Park, no evidence of breeding this year (MSA). Richmond Park, one pair bred (BAM).

The big flocks moved about so much with changes in ice conditions that only on the wildfowl count dates is there any real indication of total numbers. The following gives the chief concentrations only. At Barn Elms there were already 1,500-2,000 on Jan. 6th but by the 13th there were none, and on that date almost 6,000 were concentrated in four localities:— 680 at Girling Res., 1,213 at King George V Res., 960 at the Molesey group and 3,130 at the new Queen Elizabeth II Res. At the last site numbers dropped to 2,500 on Jan. 20th and *c.* 2,000 on the 27th. By the next count date, on Feb. 17th the total was only a hundred less than in January, but the distribution was quite different and the largest flocks were 640 at Kempton Res., 1,171 at Queen Mary Res., *c.* 2,000 at Stoke Newington Res., where numbers only started building up in the first week of February, and 2,050 at the Molesey group; there were only five at this time at the Queen Elizabeth II Res. which is far too deep to attract this species normally in large numbers. In between the monthly wildfowl counts Queen Mary Res. had up to about 2,000 on March 2nd and the Molesey reservoirs had 3,000 on the 3rd and 3,350 on the 4th. When Barn Elms froze, large numbers took to the river and there were about 650 between Barnes and Putney on Jan. 8th. This takes no account of some 2,000 in St. James's Park in January and February.

Smaller numbers, but still of interest, were 57 on the Thames off Waterloo on Feb. 1st and up to 17 on Carshalton Village pond in January and February.

Towards the end of the year another build-up began and there were 1,940 at Barns Elms on Dec. 5th rising to 2,330 on the 28th.

57 Pochard

Comparison of the numbers of Pochard from one winter to the next is made difficult by their concentration, when in large numbers, on very few waters, and if only one of these is missed on a monthly count the total becomes unreliable. For this reason no satisfactory averages could be given for either the winter of 1960-61 or 1961-62, although in the latter there had been about 2,000 at Barn Elms alone on one occasion between count dates. In 1962-63 there was again a large influx with other ducks in late December (cf. *L.B.R.*, 1962, p. 19). The biggest total for the wildfowl count localities was 2,814 on Jan. 13th, the highest since 1947-48. For 1963-64 figures are not yet complete but while not up to the exceptional level of 1962-63 they were still well above average.

The first concentrations were as usual at Barn Elms where there were *c.* 1,000 on Jan. 4th and *c.* 1,100 on the 6th. A week later the centre had shifted to Queen Elizabeth II Res., with 2,370 on the 13th, 2,500 on the 20th and *c.* 3,000 on Feb. 9th. Flocks shifted from reservoir to reservoir with changing ice conditions, and at Walton the highest numbers were 1,400 on Feb. 26th, *c.* 2,000 on Mar. 2nd and *c.* 1,300 on the 3rd. The other locality where there was a high concentration was Stoke Newington Res. Throughout January numbers varied only from 40 to 109, but on Feb. 1st there were 249 rising to 854 a week later. With some fluctuations the flock remained large until Mar. 9th when there were still 500, but on the 12th it had fallen to 88. It was in fact around the 10th-12th that most of the birds left the Area and by the 17th the wildfowl count only produced 232. Like the other ducks Pochard appeared in unusual numbers on the river, and up to 60-70 were seen between Barn Elms and Richmond, and 11 even off Waterloo. A flock of 72 flew east over Westminster Bridge on Feb. 28th.

The only records of breeding come from St. James's Park, one pair, Regent's Park, probably two pairs, and Nazeing gravel pits, one pair. At the end of the year there was another influx. At Swanscombe on Dec. 26th most of a flock of 700 diving ducks flying over were of this species, and at Barn Elms there were *c.* 1,000 on Dec. 15th and 22nd and 1,600 on the 29th.

58 Ferruginous Duck

- M Inner London: Regent's Park, a full-winged duck on Dec. 8th (DIMW).
 K Ruxley G.P., a duck or immature drake on Oct. 27th (FJH).
 The origin of these birds must remain uncertain.

Aythya hybrids

- S R. Thames, at Staines, one on Feb. 2nd with a Pochard head, black where the neck joined the body but body itself like a Tufted Duck in eclipse (EP, REFP). Walton Res., one on Jan. 26th like a female Tufted Duck but with very white undertail coverts, head neck and flanks of the same shade of brown, head shaped like a Ferruginous Duck's and white blaze at base of bill.

60 Goldeneye

In the winter of 1961-62 the largest total of Goldeneyes was 70, at that time the highest recorded in the Area, but in 1962-63 this was exceeded on Jan. 13th when there were 106. Through January to March larger parties than usual were frequent, and they had also arrived earlier than normal. By the middle of November there had been a total of 53 of which 45 were at Queen Mary Res. At this water the number was not exceeded later, but other large gatherings were 43 at Girling Res., on Jan. 13th, *c.* 20 at Walton on Feb. 27th and *c.* 24 at Staines on Mar. 31st. There were still 17 at Queen Mary

Res. and 20 at Staines on Apr. 12th. Goldeneye also joined the move to the Thames to escape the worst of the icy conditions on the reservoirs, and about 40 in two flocks were seen between Kew and Richmond on Jan. 12th (DHn) and 17 on the Weir Pool at Weybridge off Shepperton on Feb. 12th (GHG).

At Barn Elms Res., an immature drake was present from Apr. 23rd to at least July 15th. Richmond Park, a "brown-head" on Aug. 13th. The return was again early, with 19 at Queen Mary Res. on Nov. 11th, 13 at Staines on Dec. 1st and 16 in the Lea Valley on the 7th.

61 Long-tailed Duck

M Queen Mary Res., one from Nov. 20th to 26th (BEC *et al.*). Staines Res., one on Mar. 11th (PFN).

62 Velvet Scoter

- E Girling Res., a drake found dead on Jan. 12th (JF) and a duck similarly on Feb. 17th (JCE).
 H Rye Meads, one from Jan. 20th to 26th (LL-E, RMRG).
 M Stoke Newington Res., a drake found dead on Jan. 23rd (JGC).
 S River Thames, a duck near Teddington Weir on Jan. 26th-27th (EJC, BEC, WRI). Walton Res., an immature drake on Feb. 9th-10th (JFC, SG, AQ, *et al.*).

64 Common Scoter

- E Girling Res., single drakes found dead on Jan. 26th and Mar. 6th, a drake on Apr. 13th (JCE); one Aug. 4th, a drake Oct. 26th and a duck on Dec. 8th (JF). King George V Res., a duck from Nov. 2nd to 9th. Walthamstow Res., a drake on Nov. 9th (JF).
 M Brent Res., a drake on Jan. 10th (EHW) and two immature drakes on Apr. 26th (LAB). King George VI Res., a drake found dead on Mar. 23rd, a duck from Apr. 13th to 27th, a pair on the 28th and two drakes and a duck on May 5th (JBC). Staines Res., a drake on Mar. 11th and 16th and May 5th (JBC, DHn, SG, PFN), and a duck on Oct. 30th (ADP).
 K Ruxley G.P., a drake on Aug. 4th-5th (FJH). Sevenoaks, a drake on Aug. 4th (CHD) and six flew west on Dec. 28th (JGH).
 S Barn Elms Res., a duck found dead on Jan. 4th (JG), three pairs on June 16th-17th (EF, LR, WR, PJS), a duck on Dec. 8th (MDK, PJSn) and a drake on the 15th (JG, MDK, JMS, PJSn). River Thames, a drake off Chiswick, on Jan. 19th (AJC). Walton Res., an immature drake from Jan. 26th-30th (MJC, SG, WRI) and three found dead in February (MJca). Queen Elizabeth II Res., one found dead on Jan. 18th (WRI).

67 Eider

- H Hilfield Park Res., a duck on Jan. 5th-6th (BLS, EHW).
 K Sevenoaks, six brown birds on Jan. 2nd, one being a drake in transitional plumage (JGH, JMH).

69 Red-breasted Merganser

- E Lea Valley Res., three ducks from Jan. 5th-8th (PFB, JCE, JF). King George V Res., a duck on Oct. 27th (JF).
- M Brent Res., two ducks on Jan. 2nd, a drake from Mar. 16th to Apr. 30th (LAB, DCG, MDK, DT). Broadwater, a duck dead on Feb. 3rd (BPP). King George VI Res., a drake on Feb. 3rd (JBC). Staines Res., a drake on Jan. 20th (RFP) and Dec. 15th (BC). Stoke Newington Res., one from Jan. 2nd-9th (DIMW).
- S Beddington S.F., a duck on Jan. 12th (RHK). Walton Res., a duck from Mar. 1st to 28th (EJC, MJCD, RFP, SG, WRI). River Thames, four between Putney and Barnes on Jan. 13th (DCS) and a drake off Taggs Island on Feb. 20th (SG).

70 Goosander

In the later months of 1962 the numbers of Goosander were low until the second half of December, but bigger movements were noted in the last few days. The big influx, with the worsening weather came about Jan. 5th, when not only were there 200+ at Staines and 195 at Walton but also smaller parties in less usual localities, including 15 at Ruxley and 29 at Sevenoaks. During January there were also at times up to 200 at Queen Mary Res. and 100 at the Lea Valley reservoirs. It is difficult to say how many of these large flocks were separate, but a good indication of the total numbers involved comes from Queen Elizabeth II Res., where on Jan. 27th JdeRK and PBL saw 850+ flying in after 15.30 hours to roost, most coming from the direction of the Thames but parties of up to 20 strong from S.E., S. and S.W. As these may well not have included the ones in the Lea Valley there were probably at least 1,000 in the Area.

In February there were on occasions about 500 at Walton and at Queen Elizabeth II Res., but while these probably included many of the same birds the full numbers were probably still nearly as high as in January, as on the 24th in addition to 510 at Walton there was a flock at Queen Mary Res. estimated at about 300. On Mar. 2nd the respective numbers were 290 and 380. On the 3rd there were 370+ at Island Barn Res. Like other ducks Goosander made more use than usual of the river, where the largest gathering reported was of 139 between Walton and Chertsey on Feb. 12th.

The highest total on wildfowl count dates was 888 in February, by far the largest ever recorded, though as already shown there were probably even more than this in late January. The winter average calculated as in previous years was 488, compared with a previous highest of 343.

At the end of the year numbers built up at Staines to about 115 on Dec. 28th.

A drake and two ducks remained throughout the summer at Staines Res. (mo).

71 Smew

On the wildfowl count dates the highest total in the winter of 1962-63 was 77 in February, but this obviously does not reflect the true peak, as flocks of 20 to 50 or so were being seen at several localities. On Mar. 4th there were no fewer than 124 at Walthamstow Res., one less than the previous largest gathering, but it is doubtful if all these spent the winter in the Area. Apart from this one gathering maximum numbers were as follows:—

- E Walthamstow Res., 36 on Jan. 10th.
- H Broxbourne G.P., 28 on Feb. 27th. Rye Meads, 27 on Mar. 3rd.
- M Brent Res., 29 on Jan. 20th. Staines Res., 25 on Jan. 20th, Stoke Newington Res., 41 on Jan. 13th and 52 on the 27th, Queen Mary Res., 35 on Mar. 2nd.
- K Sevenoaks, 12 all through February.
- S Barn Elms Res., 30 on Jan. 5th. Island Barn Res., 24 on Feb. 17th. Queen Elizabeth II Res., c. 25 on Feb. 3rd. Walton Res., 55 on Feb. 24th and 42 on Mar. 7th. On the Thames the largest party reported was of 23 at Kingston on Jan. 26th.

In Inner London, a brown-headed bird was seen off Millbank on Feb. 21st. There was another in Kensington Gardens on Jan. 5th, and in Regent's Park Smew were present from Jan. 4th to March 12th with a peak of nine on March 7th.

73 Shelduck

Inland, Shelduck did not appear in unusual numbers in the cold spell. Apart from ones and twos at a number of places from Jan. 4th onwards the only others were four to five at Girling Res. on Jan. 19th-20th and up to seven on various dates at Barn Elms and on the river adjoining. Nearer the estuary there was nothing unusual in January but a big increase in February, when there were 500+ at Swanscombe on the 3rd (AW) and 85 at Stone on the 24th. Very few were reported from the other side of the river, but at Aveley Marsh a pair were seen with two young on June 23rd (AFH) while on the Kent side two adults and two juveniles were recorded on July 5th at Swanscombe (PFB). Other spring records included one at Rye Meads from Apr. 25th to May 9th, with three on the 2nd, and one at Staines on May 21st. A semi-resident drake at Barn Elms kept close company on Apr. 13th with a duck Mallard which appeared to be looking for a nesting site. In the autumn there was a scattering of records from Aug. 11th to Sept. 18th, the largest parties being of eight at Staines on Sept. 15th and six at Walthamstow on the 18th. In October there were 60-65 at Swanscombe on the 5th and three appeared inland at Walthamstow on the 26th. A record of two at Queen Mary Res. on Nov. 23rd was an isolated one, but there was another sprinkling in December with reports from five waters in the period 24th-29th, the biggest party being five at Staines on the 28th,

Grey Geese *sp.*

- E Rainham Marsh, one on Jan. 25th (MJA).
 M Brookman's Park, three on Nov. 26th (RCB). Greenford, 17 heard flying over on Jan. 4th and thought to be white-fronted (JRH). Hounslow, one on Jan. 15th (DGH). Stanmore, 24 on Jan. 24th believed to be pink-footed (WHDW). Ruislip, two flying on Jan. 19th (BPP).
 Inner London: 100-120 flying west near St. Paul's on Jan. 1st (AJC).
 K Ruxley G.P., 24 flying west on Dec. 14th (AW).
 S Barn Elms Res., five on Jan. 19th (SG). Dulwich, 41 on Jan. 15th flying from S.W. and turning to N.W. were thought to be white-fronted (JG). River Thames, three flying west at Isleworth on Feb. 10th (AJC).

75 Grey Lag-Goose

- H Hilfield Park Res., one flew over on Dec. 4th (JGL).
 K Ruxley G.P., a ringed bird on Mar. 2nd (KHP). Geese of this species seen at Chipstead and Seal in September and November were almost certainly of captive origin (cf. *L.B.R.* for 1962, p. 22).
 S Barn Elms Res., two adults and an immature arrived very tired at about 12.15 hours on Jan. 5th (JMS, TRS) and were last seen in the neighbourhood on Feb. 9th.
 River Thames at Hammersmith Bridge, a ringed bird on Mar. 3rd had a bill which was a delicate but definite pink in colour (LR, WR), suggesting that it was of Continental origin, possibly Scandinavian.

76 White-fronted Goose

- E Chigwell, 35-40 on Jan. 3rd (KN). Rainham Marsh, seven from Feb. 8th-12th (AFH). Walthamstow Res., 65 flying west on Feb. 2nd (RWG).
 H Cheshunt, one stayed on Holyfield Marsh for half an hour on Jan. 4th (PRJA).
 M Dollis Hill, 36 flying north on Jan. 1st (ES). Mill Hill, heard flying over at night on Mar. 12th (EHW). King George VI Res., one found dying on Jan. 26th (RSB) and another on Feb. 3rd (JBC). Palmers Green, 43 on Feb. 12th (BSMs). Staines Moor, 32 on Jan. 19th (RSB) and eight on Dec. 15th (MC, SG). Stoke Newington Res., four flying N.N.E. on Jan. 9th (DIMV). Uxbridge, 200 flying over on Jan. 16th appeared to be all of this species (MJCd).
 K Dartford Heath, 13 on Feb. 2nd (PWB). Sevenoaks, 15 on Jan. 16th, 70 flying N.E. on Mar. 10th (JGH) and two on Dec. 27th and 29th (JGH, JMH). Swanscombe Marsh, 43 flying N.N.E. on Feb. 24th (SG, MEN).
 S Barn Elms Res., one on Mar. 3rd (DCG, PB). Walton Res., three on the same date arrived from the S.E. and left in a south-easterly direction at 15.45 hours (ARLd, CO).

78A Bean Goose

- S Queen Elizabeth II Res., seven from Jan. 21st (MJcd, JdeRK, DP) until the 26th. Walton Res., one on Mar. 2nd (SG).

78B Pink-footed Goose

- E Girling Res., one on Feb. 23rd (JCE, JF).
 H Rye Meads, four flying N. on May 11th (BSN).
 M Inner London: St. Pancras Mortuary, 70+ flew N. at 15.00 hours on Jan. 1st calling loudly (ACP and cf. under Grey Geese *sp.*).
 S Beddington S.F., one on Jan. 6th (RSB).

79 Lesser Snow Goose

- K Sevenoaks, one from Dec. 3rd to the end of the year was not ringed (JGH). As this bird was still present in May 1964 it had probably escaped from a collection.

82 Canada Goose

- E Shenfield, 16 in flight on Nov. 17th (APS).
 M Broomfield Park, 12 on June 10th (FJL). Ruislip Lido, three on Apr. 12th (BPP). Stanwell Moor G.P., a pair on May 4th (JRH). Inner London: St. James's Park, the resident flock reached a peak of 45 on Aug. 19th and then declined, with some fluctuations, to seven on Dec. 19th (MB).
 B Sunnymeads G.P., five adults and two broods of five and one on June 11th (DGH). Wraysbury G.P., eight adults and eleven young on June 17th (PFN).
 K Sevenoaks, several pairs now breeding and a total of 90 birds in the district in November (*KOS Bull.*). Sutton-at-Hone, six during spring and one pair bred (RVW).
 S Barn Elms Res., three on May 6th (BAM). Chertsey Mead, two on Jan. 9th (GHG). East Molesey, five flying S.W. on May 15th (PJO). Godstone, up to nine between Mar. 17th and Apr. 24th (RFR, JNR, SDT). Oxted, three on May 11th (AJH). Painshill Park, three pairs on Apr. 28th, two with nests (EJC, WRI). River Thames, 12 at Shepperton on Feb. 12th, 17 flew over Weybridge on Jan. 13th and 14 on the 26th (GHG), and about 15 flew over Kew Gardens on Sept. 7th (Parks Report). Smaller numbers on other occasions.

84 Mute Swan

Very little information is received between census years on the breeding of this species, and it would be of interest to know more both of numbers and breeding success in view of the much lower numbers on the Thames in winter now compared with a few years ago. A herd of 45 swimming together off Millbank on Aug. 28th was unusually large for this part of the river. One found dead at Addlestone on Nov. 3rd had been ringed at Putney on Oct. 1st, 1961.

The following figures for the waters included in the monthly wildfowl counts are given for comparison with those for previous years:—

	Sept. 15	Oct. 13	Nov. 17	Dec. 15	Jan. 12	Feb. 16	Mar. 15
1963-64	215	242	222	213	183	132	140

85 Whooper Swan

- E Fishers Green, one on Feb. 10th and two on the 28th (JCE). Rainham Marsh, four on Jan. 27th (AFH). Walthamstow Res., one on Jan. 19th-20th (JF, PFB) and Feb. 5th-8th (PFB, RFS).
- H Cheshunt, one on Feb. 18th at Hooks Marsh (PRJA) and eight at Waveley G.P. on Mar. 23rd (JJW). Rye Meads, four on Jan. 26th (RAB, LL-E). Watford, five on River Gade in Cassiobury Park on Jan. 18th (JDM, PFS).
- M Harefield Moor G.P., six on Feb. 3rd (IGJ, BPP).
- K Ruxley G.P., four from Jan. 22nd to Mar. 2nd (mo). Stone Marshes, nine on Feb. 3rd (AW) and six-seven until Mar. 3rd. At Ruxley, ten wild swans flying east on Mar. 3rd were thought to be of this species (CHD, FJH). Sevenoaks, four from Jan. 23rd to Mar. 2nd (JGH, JMH).
- S Bletchingley-Godstone-Holmethorpe, two in early April were probably the same birds on each occasion and spent some time on a small tree-fringed pond in a country lane (mo). Chessington, about 50 flying E.N.E. on Mar. 22nd (DP). Hersham S.F., three on Jan. 6th were also seen on Queen Elizabeth II and Molesey reservoirs (GHG, SG, DP). Walton Common, two on Mar. 8th (RFP). Queen Elizabeth II Res., six on Jan. 20th (MJC).

86 Bewick's Swan

- E Girling Res., two on Jan. 2nd and 6th (JCE, JF).
- H Hatfield Park, one from Dec. 21st-29th (SGB). Troy Mill, three on Feb. 24th and four on Dec. 21st (IGJ, BPP).
- M Brent Res., four from Dec. 20th-22nd (LAB). Savehay G.P., three on Feb. 17th (BPP).
- B West Hyde G.P., three on Mar. 17th (JBC).
- K Sevenoaks, seven flying east on Mar. 30th (JGH). Swanscombe, one on Jan. 1st (*KOS Bull.*).
- S Barn Elms Res., one on Jan. 4th, three on the 5th, 9th and 10th, 17 arrived at 10.10 hours on the 12th and from 15-17 stayed until at least the 31st. They were also seen on the Thames at Barnes on Jan. 13th and 20th. There was a single bird on the river and at Barn Elms on a number of other dates up to Apr. 12th. On Mar. 17th the one at the reservoir was seen to be ringed. River Thames, three between Richmond and Kew on Jan. 6th were presumably the same as those seen at Barn Elms (mo). Queen Elizabeth II Res., 24 on Jan. 20th (MJC). Richmond Park, one flying S.W. on Mar. 1st (IRB).

91 Buzzard

- H Broxbourne, one drifting N.E. on Aug. 22nd (BSMs).
- M Brent Res., one on Sept. 2nd (PEF). Inner London: one moving S. over St. George's Gardens on Sept. 12th (SC).

92 Rough-legged Buzzard

- H Panshanger Park, one on Apr. 15th may have been present in the area since October, 1962 (TWG, BLS). Satisfactory identification

details have been submitted. On only two previous occasions has this species been identified in the London Area since 1900.

Buzzard (species not identified)

- E Walthamstow Res., one on Sept. 17th (PAB).

93 Sparrowhawk

The records for Surrey (over half the total) are summarized; all records are given for the other counties. One nest was built but deserted, and two other pairs may have bred.

- E Epping Forest, one on Feb. 17th (RTB).
 H Cheshunt Marsh, one on Oct. 14th (PRJA). Mimms Wood, one on Dec. 22nd (MPI, BLS).
 M Hayes, one on July 21st (AP). Pinner Hill, one on Nov. 3rd (MC). Ruislip, records for every month except January July and October, but no evidence of breeding (BPP). Inner London: Regent's Park, single birds on Mar. 3rd and 7th (RCG) and Apr. 4th (RCG, DIMW).
 K Dartford Heath, one soaring on May 22nd (KHP). Sevenoaks, one dead on Mar. 17th (KOS).
 S Isolated records for twelve localities. In addition a pair were present at a wood at Addlestone on May 13th, June 9th and 23rd (GHG), and a pair were nest building at Bookham Common on Apr. 15th, but were not seen at the nest on subsequent visits (PAA).

102 Montagu's Harrier

- M Inner London: Regent's Park, a hen or immature flying N.W. mobbed by starlings on Aug. 29th (DIMW).

100/102 Hen/Montagu's Harrier

- M Wormwood Scrubbs, a male on Sept. 5th (DCG).

103 Osprey

- H Cheshunt Lock, one on Sept. 3rd (PRJA).

104 Hobby

- H Maple Cross, one on Sept. 11th (BPP).
 M Greenford, one on July 5th (JRH). Hatch End, one perched on a house on June 10th (EV). Perry Oaks/Staines area, a number of records of single birds from May 8th to Sept. 21st (JBC *et al.*).
 S Esher, one at Sandown Park racecourse on July 8th and 17th; Oxshott Heath, one on May 18th; Weybridge, one on June 8th (GHG).

105 Peregrine

- M Brent Res., one on Apr. 20th (LAB). Dollis Hill, one on Nov. 3rd and Dec. 22nd (ES). Kilburn, a tiercel flying S.W. on Mar. 29th (DIMW).
 K Ruxley, one on Jan. 1st (FJH). Sevenoaks, one flying E. on July 28th (JGH).

110 Kestrel

The gratifying response to the appeal made last year for all records of this species gives a more encouraging picture of the status of this species than was available in 1962.

The breeding season distribution is given, and any comments on status. Isolated records have been ignored. When a locality is mentioned without qualification, the observer reported a pair present but gave no other details.

- E The position was summarized by BSMs as follows: reported during the breeding season from Chigwell, Hainault Forest, Rainham, Grange Hill, Walthamstow, King George V Res., Waltham Cross, Dagenham, Aveley, Harold Wood, Romford, Girling Res., Valentines Park, and Canning Town (mo); has decreased in the more rural areas in the North.
- H Northaw (TJ, JL); Elstree, Radlett and St. Albans (EHW); Shenley, one pair bred (ASK); Watford, a pair with young (JDM).
- M Southgate/Palmer's Green/Winchmore Hill, up to four birds seen over the area during the breeding season (BSMs); Stoke Newington, a pair with two or three flying young on the Water Tower at Green Lanes on Aug. 18th (FJL); Hampstead, a pair at nest in Kenwood on May 25th (MT); a pair bred at Christchurch, Hampstead, (REFP); Highgate Village (REB), Kilburn (WSS), Ealing, Ickenham, Northolt (PMS), Osterley Park, two pairs, Heston, Harmondsworth, Perry Oaks, Poyle G.P., Staines Moor (DGH, who states there is no evidence of a decline over five years), Hampton Court Park, one pair reared young successfully (WRI).
- M/S Inner London: Birds were seen fairly regularly in the breeding season in the Westminster/Lambeth area (GHG), at Hyde Park (PEF), Regent's Park (HBF, RCG) and in the City (RBW), but there was no evidence of breeding.
- B Black Park, Denham (DGH).
- K The only record of a pair present in the breeding season was for West Wickham (DH). As there were many isolated records other pairs may have gone unrecorded. However, AWB reports that at Hayes Common where it was formerly quite common, including a few breeding pairs, it is now very scarce. AW reported an encouraging increase in numbers at Dartford Marsh and Swanscombe.
- S Richmond Park, three pairs bred, one unsuccessful (WRI); Beddington S.F. and Mitcham Common, three pairs in area, but only one pair known to have reared young (ADP); Addington, one pair presumed to have bred, status unchanged (DS); Banstead Downs, Walton and Headley Heaths, one pair at each (IBM); one pair suspected of breeding between Hershams S.F. and Sandown Park Racecourse (GHG). Bookham Common, at least one pair bred (GB). HEP reports that it appears to be maintaining its numbers on the North Downs and in N.E. Surrey.

115 Red-legged Partridge

Breeding season distribution is given.

- E Nazeing area, often seen in breeding season (BSMs).
- H Cuffley and Northaw area, six to eight pairs (TJ, JL).
- M Perry Oaks S.F., one pair (JEH). Colnbrook, Poyle and Stanwell-moor G.Ps., one pair at each (DGH). Osterley Park, four adults and three juveniles on Sept. 7th (BVMO).
- K Present in the breeding season at Swanscombe, Horton Kirby and Hextable (DJM, RVW). Between twenty and thirty at Dartford Marsh on Nov. 30th (CHD).
- S Beddington S.F., two on May 31st (BRS). Esher, a pair with six flying young on July 3rd (GHG). Holmethorpe, two until June 29th, no young reared (DW). Richmond Park, an adult on June 3rd (BAM). Riddlesdown, three from May 2nd to 9th (SDT).

117 Quail

- H Old Parkbury, one calling on May 10th (EHW).

120 Water Rail

Reported from 33 localities up to Apr. 21st and from July 28th, maximum eight at Rye Meads, Herts, in January. The only breeding season record was of an adult between Addlestone and Weybridge, Surrey, on June 23rd (GHG).

121 Spotted Crake

- B Near Denham, at the locality mentioned in *L.B.R.* No. 27 for 1962, several were present in the early part of the year. The largest number certainly identified was five in addition to two dead birds on Mar. 24th. None were seen subsequently (REE, DIMW).

125 Corncrake

- H Watford, one calling near Whippendell Wood on July 7th (AEP).
- S Addlestone, one flushed from long grass by a dog on Oct. 25th (GHG).

126 Moorhen

- E RBW found three only on Apr. 20th and May 20th at Weald Park lake where there were *c.*20 in 1962.

127 Coot

This species suffered some mortality during the severe weather. JCE noted 40+ dead at the Lea Valley reservoirs, Essex; AW commented on heavy mortality at Dartford and Stone, and FJH found 12 dead at Ruxley, Kent, on Jan. 27th. Several were frozen in at Walton Res. on Jan. 20th (BEC).

131 Oystercatcher

- E Girling Res., one on Jan. 5th, 19th and 20th, May 4th, and three on July 27th (JF, BSMs, RFS). Rainham, one on July 25th (AFH).
- M Staines Res., one on Jan. 19th, Mar. 3rd and 11th, and Sept. 15th (BPP, PFN, RWR). Queen Mary Res., one on Mar. 2nd and 16th (RSB, SG, DT). King George VI Res., one on Aug. 14th (JBC). Mill Hill, one flying over on Nov. 26th (EHW). Perry Oaks S.F., one on Aug. 18th (CMV, JMS).
- Inner London, one flying S.W. over Bloomsbury on Oct. 7th (EHW), and one flying N. over Regent's Park on Apr. 13th (RCG).
- K Dartford, one on June 4th, two on July 29th (CHD). Swanscombe Marsh, one on May 4th, four on Aug. 29th, one on Aug. 30th, and one on Dec. 25th (MJCd, DJM, CEW, RVW).
- S Barn Elms Res., one on seven dates between Mar. 24th and Apr. 7th (MO). Dulwich Common, one flying S. on Jan. 6th (IRB). Hammer-smith, one flying down the Thames on Jan. 20th (LAB).

133 Lapwing

With the onset of the severe weather at the end of December, 1962, many left the Area, and numbers were low during January and February. With the return of milder conditions, a return movement developed in the first week of March, which reached a clear peak on the 6th when reports of small parties flying in a northerly direction were widespread. The largest numbers were in Middx., 308 at London Airport and 300 at Staines; in Kent, 200 in two hours at Bexley, 150 at Green Street Green and 200 at Dartford; in Surrey, 100 at Walton, and 124 at Weybridge. Summer movements were on a small scale.

On Dec. 1st there were two noteworthy flocks in the Area, *c.* 1,000 at Rye Meads, Herts., and *c.* 2,000 at Staines Moor, Middx. Later in the month, following several very cold days with severe frosts at night, a widespread and heavy passage to the S.W. developed on the morning of the 24th. The largest numbers were in Essex, 130 in the Lea Valley; in Middx., 170 at Ealing, *c.* 1,000 at Brent Res., between 08.30 and 12.30 hrs., 250 at Pinner, 222 at Broomfield Park; in Kent 800+ at Foots Cray, 420 at Sevenoaks; in Surrey 188 in fifteen minutes at Addington, *c.* 800 from 14.00 to 14.30 hrs. at Walton Res. On the following day there were practically none at Staines Moor where there had been *c.* 2,000 earlier in the month.

134 Ringed Plover

Spring passage was from April to early June, the largest party being 41 at Perry Oaks S.F., Middx., on June 3rd (CAW). Autumn passage was from July 21st to late October with maximum numbers occurring as in recent years at Swanscombe where there were 235 on Aug. 29th. On Aug. 13th, 175 were seen at Rainham.

Details of winter and summer records are given below.

- E Rainham, present in all winter months, the maximum being 35 on Feb. 11th (mo).
- K Dartford Creek, 15 on Dec. 8th and four on the 21st (RWC, CHD). Swanscombe Marsh, recorded on a number of dates in February and March, maximum *c.*40 on Feb. 24th, and in November and December, maximum *c.*20 on Nov. 24th; Up to eight were seen during the summer, but no evidence of breeding was obtained.
- S Beddington S.F., up to four in February and one from Mar. 1st to 5th (ADP, BRS, SDT).

135 Little Ringed Plover

About 30 pairs were present in the Area during the breeding season, of which at least 15 pairs are known to have bred or attempted to do so.

- B Three pairs at two sites in mid-June (DGH, PFN).
- E Seven pairs at five sites, at least five pairs bred (PFB, JF, AFH, ACP).
- H At least three pairs at two sites, and two of these pairs are known to have bred (HCD, IGJ, BPP, JJW).
- M Four pairs present at four sites, at least three pairs bred (JBC, DGH, MEN, AQ).
- K At least nine pairs at five sites, and at least three pairs bred (mo).
- S Four pairs at four sites, probably at least two pairs attempted breeding (GHG, DP, DW).
Inner London: an unusual record was of one seen on the grass in Archbishop's Park, Lambeth, on July 18th (GHG).

136 Kentish Plover

- E/M Girling Res., one on Sept. 7th was also seen at Ponders End S.F. Middx. (FR).

139 Grey Plover

Rather more records than usual

- E Girling Res., one on Jan. 2nd and July 29th (JCE). Rainham Marsh, two on Sept. 7th (JF, BSMs), and three on Oct. 9th (JHB).
- H Maple Cross, two in full breeding plumage on May 12th (IGJ).
- M Staines Res., one on Sept. 13th (CAW), and one flying west on Nov. 13th (DGH). Inner London: one flying north over Regent's Park on Mar. 3rd (RCG).
- K Swanscombe Marshes, two on Jan. 6th, five on Jan. 8th, one on Jan. 13th, two on Feb. 10th, one on Mar. 3rd; five on Sept. 14th, and one on Dec. 24th (BEC, KHP, KOS, DIMW, CEW, RVW).
- S Barn Elms and adjacent River Thames, one on nine dates in Jan. and on Mar. 3rd (mo). Beddington S.F., one on Jan. 5th and 6th (BRS).

140 Golden Plover

A flock of 200 flying north over Rye Meads, Herts., (RMRG), and three flying north over Perry Oaks S.F., on May 3rd (JRH), are clearly referable to spring migration. The maximum winter numbers are given below.

- E Chigwell, 80 flying W. on Dec. 22nd (KN).
- H Shenleybury, 150 on Nov. 10th and Dec. 1st (EHW).
- M Staines Moor, 150 on Nov. 10th (JBC).
- K Foots Cray Meadows, 274 flying S. on Dec. 24th (CAD).
- S Walton Res., c.100 flying S.W. with Lapwings on Dec. 24th were thought by the observer WRI to be this species.

143 Turnstone

- E Girling Res., one on Jan. 20th (JCE), two on July 28th and one on 30th (JF). Rainham Marsh, one on Feb. 11th and 12th (KB, AFH), one on Aug. 18th, 24th and 27th (JHB, AFH, JW) and two on Sept. 7th (JF, BSMs).
- M King George VI Res., one on Dec. 28th and 29th (MC, JAJ). Perry Oaks S.F., two on June 3rd and one on June 4th (BVMO, CAW). Queen Mary Res., one on May 22nd (RFP).
- K Swanscombe Marsh, three on Feb. 3rd (KOS), four on Feb. 16th (CHD), one on Feb. 24th (BEC), two on Mar. 3rd (MJC); three or four on July 21st and one on July 28th, five on Aug. 10th and one on Sept. 1st (RWC, PJO, CEW).
- S Queen Elizabeth II Res., one on May 19th (DP).

145 Snipe

No records of breeding were received. The maximum winter numbers are shown below.

- H Rye Meads, c.100 on Mar. 17th and c.250 on Dec. 7th (RMRG).
- M Perry Oaks S.F., c.150 on Nov. 24th (BVMO).
- K Elmers End S.F., c.500 on Jan 4th (DS) and 130 on Dec. 14th and 15th (PM).
- S Beddington S.F., c. 3,000 on Jan. 6th and c.500 on Dec. 29th (BRS, TK).

146 Great Snipe

- B At the locality near Denham mentioned in the *L.B.R.* for 1962 a single bird was seen on Jan. 13th and 27th and Feb. 23rd (REE, DGH, DIMW).

147 Jack Snipe

The only large numbers reported were 47 at Elmers End S.F., Kent, on Jan. 13th and c.30 on Dec. 8th (TK, PM). Up to 20 were present at Beddington S.F., Surrey during January (BRS).

148 Woodcock

Records for the breeding season and for Inner London are given.

- H Broxbourne Woods, two roding on July 3rd (RFS). Panshanger, one roding on May 14th (JJW).
- M Inner London: one in Regent's Park on Apr. 22nd (EHW), and one in Holland Park on Oct. 28th (mo).
- K Sevenoaks area, one roding on May 6th (KOS).
- S Bookham Common, roding seen on June 1st and a pair present on July 7th (GB, LB, PJO). Esher Common, one or two seen on four dates in June and roding noted on July 2nd and 3rd (MC, PJO). Headley Heath, present on at least three dates in June and roding witnessed on 1st and 14th (GMC, MAH, AJH). Juniper Top, two roding on May 22nd (GMC). Princes Coverts, one on June 2nd (DP). Near Silvermere, one on June 8th (GHG). Walton Heath, one roding in June (IBM).

150 Curlew

The number of localities at which this species was seen in each month is given below.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
15	8	8	1	2	3
July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
6	8	4	1	3	4

The high figures for January to March compared with recent years are accounted for by visits of from one to five birds to reservoirs and sewage farms during the severe weather. At this time large numbers were present at Beddington S.F., Surrey, maximum *c.*20 on Jan. 26th, Rainham Marsh, Essex, maximum 38 on Feb. 12th, and at Stone, Kent, maximum 45 on Feb. 3rd.

The largest number noted during the autumn passage was 31 at Rainham Marsh on Aug. 29th.

151 Whimbrel

There were spring records of up to two birds at eight localities on dates extending from April 25th to May 25th. In the autumn there were records from seven localities on nine dates between July 21st and September 12th, with maxima of 14 at Brondesbury, Middx., on Aug. 5th (DEDC) and 11 at Gillingham, Kent, on July 28th (KOS).

154 Black-tailed Godwit

- H Hilfield Park Res., one on Aug. 24th (ASK).
- M Perry Oaks S.F., one on Sept. 5th (JFC).

155 Bar-tailed Godwit

- E Rainham Marsh, two on July 25th (BJK).
- H Hilfield Park Res., one on Aug. 27th and 28th (ASK, EHW). Rye Meads, 14 circled and flew off N.E. on Oct. 20th (JC, CW, MW).

- M Perry Oaks S.F., two on May 4th (JFC, AQ) and Sept. 6th (CAW).
Queen Mary Res., one on Apr. 27th (AVF).
K Swanscombe Marsh, two on Dec. 26th (RVW).

156 Green Sandpiper

The number of localities at which this species occurred in each month is given below.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	June.
8	9	2	6	3	2
July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
13	13	12	3	5	4

The maximum number recorded was 10 at Rainham, Essex, on Aug. 28th (KN).

157 Wood Sandpiper

There were three spring records: one at Cheshunt, Herts., on May 7th (JJW), and single birds at Perry Oaks S.F., Middx., on May 11th and 25th (RSB, DGH). Autumn passage extended from July 6th to September 15th. As in 1962, the main movement took place in August with records from seven localities, the maximum being six at Rainham Marsh, Essex, on Aug. 18th (RT).

159 Common Sandpiper

For the third year in succession there were no reports of breeding in the Area. There were records for every month of the year with the exception of March, winter records coming from three localities in Herts in December and two in Kent in January and February. The maximum for the year at any single locality was 57 at Girling Res., Essex, on July 29th during the autumn passage (JCE).

161 Redshank

There were winter records from 21 localities, far more than in 1962, due to the appearance of single birds and small parties at reservoirs, sewage farms and by rivers during the severe weather in January and February. Throughout this period birds were present at Beddington S.F., maximum 16 on Feb. 15th, and at Barn Elms and the Thames from Hammersmith to Barnes, maximum 11 on Jan. 27th. The main winter concentration was as usual in the Thames marshes: in Kent, at Dartford, *c.*150 on Feb. 23rd; Littlebrook, *c.*200 on Nov. 9th (FJH); and Swanscombe, *c.*100 on Dec. 8th (AQ) and in Essex at Aveley Marsh, *c.*300 on Feb. 12th to 15th (AFH). Breeding records are given in full.

- E Fishers Green, a nest with three eggs on May 7th (APS). Rainham Marsh, 11 pairs present on June 8th most of which were probably breeding (AFH). Sewardstone G.P., a pair present on June 27th (PFB).

- M Staines Moor, one or two pairs present in breeding season (DGH).
 K Swanscombe Marshes, a nest with four eggs on May 19th (CEW).
 S Beddington S.F., two or three pairs present in the breeding season (BRS).

162 Spotted Redshank

- E Aveley Marsh, one on June 10th. Rainham Marsh, one on Aug. 29th and two on Sept. 12th (AFH, BK, RT).
 H Rye Meads, one on Aug. 18th and Oct. 26th (RMRG).
 M Brent Res., two on Aug. 7th (CGM). Perry Oaks S.F., one on May 7th and 18th and 19th; one on Aug. 17th and 18th and up to two from Sept. 11th to 15th (mo).
 K Swanscombe Marshes, one on June 22nd, Aug. 13th, 15th and 30th, Sept. 8th, and Dec. 24th (MJCd, DJM, CEW, RVW).

165 Greenshank

The spring passage records extend from March 31st to June 10th and are given in full below.

- E Aveley Marsh, two on June 3rd. Rainham Marsh, five on May 30th (AFH).
 H Rye Meads, three on Mar. 31st and one on Apr. 6th (RMRG).
 M Brent Res., one on May 23rd (LAB). Ashford G.P., one on June 10th (BEC, AQ). Perry Oaks S.F., one on Apr. 26th (PMS).
 S Barn Elms Res., one on Apr. 7th (IRB).
 Widespread in the autumn with records extending from June 30th to Oct. 13th. The maximum was 10 at Perry Oaks S.F., on Aug. 24th (MB).

166 Marsh Sandpiper

One at Swanscombe Marsh, Kent, from August 26th until at least Sept. 3rd was the first record for the London Area (MJC, PJO, KHP, CEW, DIMW).

169 Knot

- E Aveley Marsh, 10 on Feb. 12th and eight on the 15th (AFH). Girling Res., one on Jan. 19th and up to two on various dates from Sept. 8th to 20th (JCE, JF). Rainham Marsh, five on Aug. 18th, one on Aug. 20th, two on Aug. 23rd, five on Sept. 3rd, four on Sept. 4th and two on Sept. 5th (JHB, KB, AFH, BK, RT, JW).
 H Hilfield Park Res., one on Aug. 18th (DT).
 M Perry Oaks S.F., one on five dates between Sept. 4th and 9th (MC, SG, BVMO, CFT). Queen Mary Res., one on Jan. 5th, two on Mar. 23rd and one on Nov. 11th (RSB, RFP).
 K Swanscombe Marshes, one on Mar. 17th, three on Sept. 12th and 13th and Dec. 26th (CEW, RVW).
 S Barn Elms Res., one from Jan. 26th to 28th and two on Feb. 2nd, 3rd and 7th (mo). River Thames at Hammersmith, two on Feb. 3rd (LAB). Worcester Park S.F., one on Mar. 22nd (MJCd).

170 Purple Sandpiper

- E Walthamstow Res., one on Nov. 17th (PF, RFS).
 M Queen Mary Res., one on Nov. 12th (JBC).

171 Little Stint

It now seems certain that one or two wintered in the Thames estuary near the boundary of our Area in 1961/62 and 1962/63 (see Swanscombe records below and in *L.B.Rs.* for 1961 and 1962).

- E Rainham Marsh, one on Aug. 18th and 20th, two on Sept. 2nd and 3rd, one on the 7th, three on the 12th, six on the 15th and four on the 27th (JFB *et al.*).
 H Hilfield Park Res., one on Aug. 28th (ASK).
 M Perry Oaks S.F., up to five from Aug. 20th to Sept. 10th, but at least eight on Sept. 3rd; one on Sept. 21st (mo).
 K Elmers End S.F., one on Aug. 18th and 20th (TK, PM). Swanscombe Marsh, two on Jan. 6th and Feb. 24th, and one or two on nine dates in March and April; two on July 21st, one on Aug. 24th, up to seven from Aug. 30th to Sept. 11th, one on Sept. 27th and 29th; one on Dec. 24th and 26th (mo). Sevenoaks, one on May 8th and Aug. 4th (KOS).

178 Dunlin

There were far more occurrences in winter away from the Thames Estuary than in 1962 with records from 18 localities. Many of these were at the beginning of the year and were obviously attributable to the arctic weather conditions. They were particularly regular at Beddington S.F., Surrey, where there were up to six in January and up to five in February. The maximum numbers were again recorded at Swanscombe Marshes, Kent, where there were *c.* 600 on Feb. 10th (BEC), and *c.* 1,000 on Dec. 26th (RVW). An interesting record is of one seen at the edge of the Serpentine in Hyde Park on Apr. 30th (PEF).

179 Curlew Sandpiper

- E Aveley Marsh, three on Sept. 7th (JF). Rainham Marsh, one on Aug. 27th; 38 on Sept. 7th (JF), and up to seven on nine other dates in the month (JHB, AFH, BK, BSMs).
 H Hilfield Res., one on Aug. 22nd (DT).
 M Perry Oaks S.F., a very marked autumn passage with one or two from Aug. 24th to 31st, *c.* 20 from Sept. 1st to 3rd and smaller numbers up to the 7th, one on Sept. 29th and Oct. 5th and 6th (mo).
 K Swanscombe Marsh, very numerous indeed on the autumn passage which extended from Aug. 27th to Oct. 2nd. The maximum number recorded was 68 on Sept. 9th (RVW).

181 Sanderling

- E Girling Res., three on Jan. 4th and two on Jan. 19th (JCE). Rainham Marsh, two on Sept. 6th and one on the 7th (JHB, JF, BSMs).
- H Cheshunt, one on May 5th (PRJA).
- M King George VI Res., two on Jan. 19th and four on May 26th (RSB, JBC). Queen Mary Res., one on Jan. 5th and 6th; three on May 5th and 7th, one on May 8th and 15th, and 12 on May 22nd (RSB, EJC, MJCd, WRI, RFP).
- K Swanscombe Marsh, single birds on Sept. 25th and 26th (RVW).
- S Barn Elms Res., one on May 5th-6th, four on the 11th and one on the 22nd (AJC, BM). Beddington S.F., one on Feb. 18th (BRS). Queen Elizabeth II Res., one on May 19th (DP).

184 Ruff

The numbers occurring in the Perry Oaks area, Middx., in the winter were lower than in 1962, the maximum seen during the period January to March being 13 on Mar. 23rd (RSB), and from November to December ten on Nov. 27th (MEN, AQ). Other winter records were three at Queen Mary Res., on Jan. 5th and 27th, and one on Jan. 12th (RSB, BEC, SG), and two on Rainham Marsh, Essex, on Feb. 11th (KB). In Kent one was seen at Elmers End S.F., on every visit between Jan. 4th and Mar. 3rd., and one on Dec. 15th (TK, PM); at Dartford one was seen on Jan 19th, three on Dec. 27th and two on Dec. 30th (FJH, TK) and at Swanscombe Marsh five on Feb. 24th (JFC, SB); one was present at Beddington S.F., Surrey, on four dates in February (BRS).

All wintering birds had left the Area by the end of March, but there was a small passage of up to four noted at Rainham, Essex, and Queen Mary Res., and Perry Oaks S.F., Middx., from May 19th to June 12th. Autumn passage was recorded from nine localities from July 8th to Sept. 28th with a maximum of *c.* 40 at Perry Oaks S.F., Middx., on Aug. 24th (BVMO).

187 Grey Phalarope

- E Wanstead Park lakes, Ilford, one on Sept. 14th (RWP).

189 Stone Curlew

- M London Airport, one on July 29th (AP).
- K Sevenoaks, one on July 31st (KOS).

193 Arctic Skua

- M King George VI Res., one on Sept. 27th and 28th (JBC, MC, DGH).
- K Sidcup, a group of six flew over to the south-west on Sept. 28th (CHD, RWC).

For a discussion on the winter numbers of Greater Black-backed, Lesser Black-backed, Herring, Common, and Black-headed Gulls see the paper on pages 63-68,

202 Glaucous Gull

- E Girling Res., a third-winter bird on Mar. 23rd (JF). Walthamstow Res., a second-winter bird on Jan. 31st (PFB).
 S Molesey S.F., a second-winter bird was seen flying north-west on Jan. 13th (MJC, MJCd, KDE, SG, MJM).

203 Iceland Gull

- H Panshanger Park, one was seen flying south-west with five Herring Gulls on Feb. 17th (BLS). This is the first definite record of this species for the county.
 S An immature bird on the Thames near Hammersmith Bridge on Jan. 31st (RSB).

202/203 Glaucous/Iceland Gull

- M Brent Res., one on Mar. 18th (RFP). Queen Mary Res., single birds on Mar. 16th, Apr. 27th and 28th, and May 2nd (RSB, MJCd, HJF, MEN, AQ).
 S Thames at Chiswick, an adult on Jan. 26th (JFC, MEN).

207 Little Gull

- E Girling Res., an immature on Sept. 29th (JF). Grays Thurrock, an adult on Sept. 7th (DIMW). Rainham Marsh, two immatures were present from August 13th to 23rd, and one found dead on Aug. 31st may have been one of these (BK, KB, IJR, PW).
 M Finsbury Park, one on Jan. 3rd (DIMW). Queen Mary Res., one on Nov. 11th (JBC). Staines reservoirs, an adult on July 15th; an immature on Sept. 7th, 8th and 12th, and Oct. 2nd, 4th and 6th; an adult on Oct. 30th, 31st and Nov. 2nd; two adults and an immature on Nov. 10th and an adult on Dec. 1st (mo).
 S Barn Elms Res., an immature on Aug. 29th (PEF). Island Barn Res., an immature on Sept. 8th (DP).

208 Black-headed Gull

- M There were only five nests at Perry Oaks S.F. on May 26th (JFC). Birds recovered in the Area during the year had been ringed abroad as follows:
 Torhamn, Blekinge, Sweden, June 17th, 1962, as nestling.
 Finland, no other details available.
 Lake Engure, Latvian S.S.R., June 16th, 1962, as nestling.
 Kijkduin, Zuid Holland, Sept. 1st, 1962, as juvenile.

211 Kittiwake

- M Staines Res., a juvenile on Sept. 8th, and an adult on Nov. 24th (CMV).
 K Swanscombe Marsh, an adult on Jan. 6th, and a flock of 10 on Sept. 4th (JFC, AQ).
 S Barn Elms Res., an adult on Apr. 15th (SG).

212 Black Tern

The spring passage was of short duration from May 26th to June 4th, and at the peak from June 2nd to 4th there were only about 30-40 in the Area.

The autumn passage began on July 21st but numbers were small until Aug. 30th. On that day five parties totalling 108 flew W. up the Thames at Swanscombe, Kent, and a party of 38 was seen at dusk at Barn Elms Res., Surrey. For the next week there were usually at least 30 in the area, and 60 on Sept. 3rd. None were seen after Sept. 17th.

217/218 Common/Arctic Tern

The spring passage was from April 10th to June 4th, but the numbers were very small.

The autumn passage extended over a long period from July 1st to Dec. 3rd, but the main movements were in the second half of August and the first half of October.

Numbers inland did not exceed 25 at any locality, but larger numbers were seen at Swanscombe, Kent, the maximum being *c.* 100 on Aug. 30th.

Several Common Terns summered in the Lea Valley, and a pair may have bred at a gravel pit at Cheshunt where two adults appeared to be feeding a juvenile unable to fly on July 26th.

219 Roseate Tern

- S Barn Elms Res., one seen in flight and at rest on July 24th (IRB, TRS). This is the fourth record for the London Area since 1900, the first having been seen as recently as 1953.

222 Little Tern

- M Ruislip Res., one flying S. on July 7th (PJSn).
 K Sevenoaks, four on Aug. 24th (KOS). Swanscombe Marsh, one on Aug. 21st (CHD).
 S Barn Elms Res., one on Aug. 22nd (DCG).

223 Sandwich Tern

- E Girling Res., one on Sept. 19th (JF). Rainham Marsh, two on Aug. 29th (BK) and one on Sept. 2nd and 5th (AFH).
 M Brent Res., one on June 1st (LAB). Staines reservoirs, five on Sept 11th (MC, DGH) and two on Sept. 29th (MSA).
 K Sevenoaks, one on Apr. 16th (KOS). Swanscombe, at least 12 on Aug. 30th (Mjcd).

230 Puffin

- M Inner London: an adult in winter plumage floating up the River Thames, dead, at Westminster, on Feb. 25th (DFM).

232 Stock Dove

Although reported from Essex, Middx., Surrey and Kent during the breeding season no evidence of breeding was obtained. The largest parties seen were 24 at Thornwood Common, Essex, on Mar. 9th (DIMW) and numbers ranging from 15 to 30 in June at Beddington S.F.

M/S Inner London: Regent's Park, two January records, two April and two August (RGG, DIMW, EHW). Lambeth, one Apr. 19th (GHG).

All records, particularly during the breeding season would be welcome for 1964.

234 Wood Pigeon

Considerable movements of Wood Pigeons took place during the cold weather, Jan. 6th being the peak day, but the numbers moving N. and S. were approximately equal. On Jan. 8th there were 153 in Archbishop's Park, Lambeth, as against 10 the previous day (GHG) and there was a big roost in Holland Park during the cold weather (EPB). Up to 5,000 birds were reported feeding on green crops at Addlestone in January (GHG), and between Barn Elms and Barnes Wood Pigeons were all along the tide wrack on Jan. 20th (DIMW). The breeding population was reported to be halved at Dollis Hill by the cold winter (ES).

Several observers reported autumn movements, and spectacular returning roosting movements in the morning were recorded from Ruxley in October/December (KHP). A small breeding colony was reported on rainwater pipes at the Quadrilateral, Belsize Park (REFP).

235 Turtle Dove

Breeding records for this species from Essex, Surrey and Kent and its presence in Middlesex during the breeding season show that this bird is well distributed, particularly outside the built-up area. Only two records were received from Herts. The only Inner London records were from Regent's Park.

Collared Dove

With breeding records from Essex and Middlesex and the first Inner London record this species continues to spread in the London area.

- E Buckhurst Hill, one January to April (CIF, BSMs). Epping, one on June 4th (FR). Ilford, one to six present throughout year but no evidence of breeding (RWP, JM). Leytonstone, three on May 24th (GJH). Shenfield and Hutton, nest and two young birds June 29th; second nest found July 20th; numbers reached 12 at end of year (APS).
- H Cuffley, one Sept. 5th; Northaw, one Oct. 5th (TJ, JL).
- M Cranford, pair seen occasionally (DGH). Heston, pair present throughout the year, courtship and mutual preening observed but no young (DGH), one dead in roadway Sept. 29th (RAD). Hounslow,

pair reared two young (DGH). Osterley, pair May/June, broken eggs found (DGH). Inner London, Regent's Park, one Sept. 2nd (DIMW). Four other non-breeding records.

K Sevenoaks, one Apr. 13th, one May 31st (KOS).

S Banstead, Nork Way, up to three present throughout the year but no evidence of breeding (EMF); Sunnymeade Avenue, seven Aug. 5th (SG). Carshalton Beeches, two Mar. 17th, one Mar. 31st (MJCD). Woodmansterne, 11 Aug. 5th (SG).

237 Cuckoo

Five observers in Kent, Surrey and Middlesex reported a decline or scarcity of this species although there were a number of records from different localities in these three counties and several from Essex, it being recorded as "a little under normal" at Ockendon (MJA); but again no records were received from Herts. At Strawberry Hill one was recorded for the first time since 1960 (LB). Continued reports on the status of this species would assist in establishing the position.

M Inner London: two records for the year.

241 Barn Owl

With breeding season records from only eight localities and its absence noted at Osterley and Addlestone there appears to be a marked decline in this species (*cf.* L.B.R. 1961). Successful breeding was recorded at Cuffley (MBC, JAH). In January and February one was frequently seen hunting in daylight over the snow at Addlestone (GHG). All records for 1964 would be welcome.

244 Snowy Owl

E Sewardstonebury, an adult female from Mar. 2nd to 28th (FR, BH, FE, EJ), is the first record for the London Area.

246 Little Owl

This species was recorded from all counties except Bucks with breeding season records from 14 localities and successful breeding at Addlestone (GHG). There was only one Inner London record, St. James's Park, Nov. 26th. It was reported as absent from the Hayes area of Kent and there were few records from Herts, only two being heard during an owl census at Cuffley in April (MBC). All records for 1964 would be welcome with a view to establishing its present status.

247 Tawny Owl

The greatly increased number of records from all counties including Inner London show this as the commonest species of owl in the London area. Twenty-eight were heard during an owl census at Cuffley on Apr. 1st (MBC, JAH, TJ, JL). There were two reports of dead birds, a pair Epping Forest May 18th (DIMW) and one adult and three juveniles Bishops Park, Fulham, late April (PJSN). The species was reported as scarcer than usual at East Molesey (JdeRK). There

were several reports of birds feeding during daylight in the cold weather (GHG). Breeding records for Inner London are given below.

- M Inner London: Regent's Park, one juvenile seen on May 16th and an adult with two young later in the summer (DIMW, HBF); Holland Park, one pair bred successfully (EPB).

248 Long-eared Owl

All records are given.

- H Mimms Woods, one heard, Mar. 21st (BLS). Near Cuffley, one heard July 30th (JL).
M Mill Hill, one Oct. 5th and Nov. 19th (EHW).

249 Short-eared Owl

All records are given.

- E Rainham Marsh, one on Feb. 11th, two on Feb. 15th, one on Nov. 27th (KB, AFH).
S Raynes Park, one on Apr. 8th (EMG). Wimbledon Common, one on Mar. 23rd (LR, WR).

252 Nightjar

Breeding season distribution is given.

- E Epping Forest, one on May 30th and June 30th (ARL, FR). Ongar Park Wood, a male and a female and another male churring on July 30th (JTS).
H Broxbourne Woods, 14 breeding pairs located (TWG).
K Darenth, one seen and heard June 4th to 6th, but not subsequently (CEW). Bexley, two pairs at Joyden's Wood in June and July (CHD).
S Chelsham, an unmated male from June to mid-July (HEP). Esher Common, two pairs in June and July (PJO). Farleigh, present on most evenings between June 6th and July 18th (LWC). Headley Heath, two pairs, May to August (IBM). Limpsfield Chart, three males on June 8th, still present on Aug. 2nd (ADB, AJH). Walton Heath, at least three pairs (RSB, IBM). Weybridge, one churring on June 9th (GHG).

255 Swift

The spring passage was on a modest scale compared with 1962. Departure in the autumn was later than usual; *c.* 2,000 was the maximum reported, on the late date of Aug. 26th, at Beddington S.F., Surrey (BRS), and there were *c.* 500 at West Hyde, Middx., on Aug. 24th (IGJ).

- M Inner London: three young were reared by a pair at Little Boltons, Kensington (BP), apparently the first proved case of breeding in Inner London for some years.

258 Kingfisher

Two at Darenth G.P., Kent, in April and May (rvw), was the only breeding season record. At other times reported from 25 localities,

but the species is clearly at a low ebb, having decreased markedly over the last few years.

261 Hoopoe

- M Brent Res., one on Apr. 23rd (LAB).
K Sevenoaks, one on May 27th (JGH, JMH).

262 Green Woodpecker

Reports from fifteen areas mentioned decreases following the severe weather. At Bookham Common, Surrey, it was not apparently reduced in numbers (GB).

263 Great Spotted Woodpecker

This species suffered less in the severe weather than the Green Woodpecker. There were three reports of decreases, three of little change, and in Epping Forest and at Hampstead it increased.

- M Inner London: a pair bred at Holland Park (EPB).

264 Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Reported from 46 localities. Breeding was proved at Weald Park, Essex (MPT), Harrow Weald and Stanmore Commons, Middx. (EHW) and Weybridge, Surrey (GHG). Pairs were present in the breeding season at Epping Forest, Essex, six pairs (mo), Aldenham Res., Herts. (EHW), Hayes Common, Kent (AWB), and Reigate Heath, Surrey (JAF).

- M Inner London: Holland Park, a pair from Mar. 16th to Apr. 2nd, one on Nov. 14th and Dec. 15th (EPB); Regent's Park, one on Apr. 2nd (EHW).

265 Wryneck

All records are given.

- H Bayford, one on May 30th (JAH). Mimms Wood, a pair remained for about two weeks from Apr. 21st (RB). Northaw Great Wood, one on Apr. 12th (JAH).
S Holmethorpe, two on Apr. 20th (DW). Oxted, two heard on May 5th (AJH). Nr. Woldingham, one on several dates from Apr. 30th to May 25th (AJH, IBM).

271 Woodlark

All records are given. Only three pairs were located in the breeding season.

- E Fishers Green, one on June 3rd (PFB).
S Richmond Park, three pairs in the breeding season (IRB). Selsdon Wood, one on Mar. 3rd (IGM). Shirley Park Golf Course, one on June 29th (RGB). Walton Heath, one on Aug. 8th (ADP). Weybridge, St. George's Hill Golf Course, five on June 8th, 12 on July 6th, four Oct. 18th, seven Nov. 10th and three Dec. 13th, but no evidence of breeding (GHG).

272 Skylark

No large scale movements were noted during the hard weather, but there was a notable concentration at Beddington S.F., Surrey. From *c.* 600 on Jan. 6th, numbers had increased to *c.* 2,000 on Jan. 13th, to 2,500 on Jan. 20th and 3,000 on the 23rd and 25th. Numbers then fell daily to 1,200 on Jan. 28th, but on Feb. 2nd had increased to 2,000. The following day there were 1,500, but from then until Mar. 3rd numbers fluctuated between 200 and 600, and by Mar. 24th had fallen to *c.* 80 (BRS). Other large concentrations reported were 500 at Rye Meads, Herts, on Feb. 16th (RMRG), 270 at Perry Oaks, Middx., on Feb. 2nd (REFP, EP), up to 200 in Regent's Park in early January (RCG) and 200 at Barn Elms Res., Surrey, on Jan. 13th (PJSn).

Only two observers commented on reduced numbers in the breeding season, MLC for Surrey generally, and HEP for the North Downs area.

273 Shore Lark

K Swanscombe Marsh, single birds on Jan. 24th, Feb. 3rd and 24th and from Mar. 2nd to 9th (BEC *et al.*) and one on Dec. 8th (AQ).

274 Swallow

On Sept. 22nd CEW estimated that *c.* 20,000 were roosting in reeds at Northfleet, Kent, the numbers gradually reducing on subsequent dates. Late birds were seen at Ruxley G.P., Kent, on Nov. 9th (AW) and at King George VI Res., Middx., on Nov. 10th (JBC).

277 Sand Martin

Estimates of large numbers in the late summer and autumn and a recovery of a bird ringed abroad are given.

H Rye Meads, 1,000 on Aug. 18th, 22nd and 24th, 1,500 on the 25th, 700 on Sept. 1st and 7th (RMRG).

M Ashford G.P., numbers at a roost estimated at 800 on July 29th, 1,000 on Aug. 6th, and 10,000 on Sept. 6th (BEC, JFC, MEN, AQ). Hampton Res., 1,000 on Sept. 8th (SG). Staines Res., 1,000-1,500 on Sept. 11th (MC).

K Sevenoaks, a bird caught on June 7th had been ringed by R. Spencer at Figuig, Morocco, on Apr. 5th, 1963.

S Walton Res., 500 on Aug. 18th and 600 on the 25th (CO).

[279 Raven

An escaped pet was at large in Weybridge, Surrey, from Aug. 10th to 20th (GHG).]

281 Hooded Crow

E Fishers Green, one on Feb. 10th (JCE). Girling Res., one from Jan. 26th to Feb. 25th and two on Feb. 17th (JCE, JF). King George V Res., one on Feb. 16th (JF). These records may refer to two birds only.



PLATE 1. COLLARED DOVE, AN INCREASING SPECIES

(photographed by *Eric Hosking*)



PLATE 2. WOODLARK, A DECREASING SPECIES

(photographed by Eric Hosking)

- M West Hendon, two on Jan. 23rd (EHW).
 S Beddington S.F., one from Jan. 6th to Apr. 14th (BRS, RSB, ADP).
 Wey Manor Farm, one on Jan. 5th (GHG).

282 Rook

- M Inner London: Regent's Park, one on Mar. 20th, two on the 27th (RCG); one on Oct. 19th (RCG, DIMW).

283 Jackdaw

- M/S Inner London: a pair attempted to breed in Kensington Gardens, but were harassed by crows (PEF). Also reported from Regent's Park, St. James's Park, and Archbishop's Park, Lambeth.

284 Magpie

The only record for Inner London was one flying N.E. over Queen's Road Station, Battersea, Surrey, in a snowstorm on Feb. 1st (GHG).

286 Jay

There was a noticeable influx of this species south of the Thames in early October, particularly in Kent and to a lesser extent in Surrey.

In Kent flocks of over 40 were seen at Foots Cray on Oct. 9th and 10th and at Sundridge Park on Oct. 10th, and local increases or parties on the move were noted also at Dartford, Ruxley, Danson Park, Green Street Green, Downe, Chislehurst, New Eltham, and Elmers End.

In Surrey reports were received from Dulwich, Brixton, Clapham, Earlsfield, Addington, Holmethorpe, Dorking to Croydon, Ashted Forest, Oxshott, East Molesey and Weybridge. The main influx appears to have occurred between Oct. 5th and 10th. No corresponding increase was noted north of the Thames.

Breeding records for Inner London are given below:

- M Inner London: Green Park, one at nest on June 10th (MB). Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, at least two pairs bred; three young were seen (PEF). Holland Park, two or three pairs bred (EPB). Notting Hill, a pair reared three young at Ladbroke Grove (EPB, BP). Regent's Park, up to six young seen from three broods (RCG).

290 Coal Tit

- M Inner London, a pair bred successfully in Holland Park (EPB).

292 Marsh Tit

- M Inner London: one in Regent's Park on Sept. 6th (RCG).

293 Willow Tit

Breeding season distribution is given.

- E Epping Forest, a pair and two singing males, Mar. 7th to May 6th (HAB). Hainault Forest, a pair excavating a nest hole on Apr. 30th were not seen subsequently (KN).

- H Mimms Wood, two on July 3rd (BLS). Northaw Great Wood, two on Apr. 7th and 12th (TJ, JAH). Watford, two in Gade Avenue on Apr. 14th (JDM).
- M Ruislip Common, Copse Wood and Park Wood, at least six pairs (BPP). Scratch Wood, two pairs (EHW).
- B Denham, one pair (DGH).
- K Bexley, may have bred in Joyden's Wood (CHD). West Wickham, a nest with six young on May 19th (DH). Westerham, two at Chart's Edge on Apr. 27th (RGB).
- S Addington, one pair (DS). Banstead Wood, one pair on Apr. 7th (RHBF). Bookham Common, one on June 30th and July 13th (GB). Burgh Heath, a pair on May 5th (RHBG). Caterham, one on May 9th (IGM). Great Hurst Wood, a pair on Apr. 17th (JAF). Reigate Heath, a pair on Apr. 13th (JAF). Selsdon Wood, three pairs (DS).

294 Long-tailed Tit

Although reports are somewhat conflicting, and it is not possible from the information received to assess the status of this species which is vulnerable to severe weather conditions, there is little doubt that its numbers are much reduced.

- E Little information received but the general view was "fewer than usual since the cold spell".
- H No records received of this species after the severe weather.
- M EHW reports that the Long-tailed Tit suffered very badly during the winter. At Ruislip, however, BPP found three to four pairs in the area of Ruislip Common, Copse Wood and Park Wood as in 1962. There were no other reports of breeding pairs.
- K No comments on the effect of the severe weather were received. Only two pairs in the breeding season were recorded, at Sevenoaks (KOS) and Sutton-at-Hone (RJW). Birds were seen after the breeding season at Dartford Heath, Joyden's Wood, Petts Wood and Stone.
- S More information was received than for other counties. GB gave the number of pairs in 160 acres of woodland and scrub at Bookham Common as none compared with 9-10 in 1962. HEP considered the species well-nigh exterminated in the area Farleigh-Chelsham-Addington. Serious reduction or complete absence were recorded for Esher, St. George's Hill Golf Course, Burgh Heath, Sanderstead and Caterham. The only areas from which pairs were reported in the breeding season were: Esher Common, St. George's Hill Golf Course, Wimbledon Common, Oxshott Woods, Selsdon Wood, Headley Heath, Banstead Wood, Reigate Heath and Mickleham.
- M Inner London: St. James's Park, two on Feb. 18th (GHG) and Oct. 4th (DFM).

295 Bearded Tit

- E Rainham, one heard calling at Berwick Pond on Dec. 13th (MJA).

296 Nuthatch

M/S Inner London: two pairs bred in Holland Park (EPB) and one pair in Kensington Gardens (RWH). Single birds were seen in St. James's Park on Jan. 29th (DFM), Regent's Park on Nov. 3rd (RCG), at Lambeth Palace Gardens, and Dean's Yard, Westminster, on Feb. 18th (GHG), and at Archbishop's Park, Lambeth, on Mar. 6th and 7th (GHG).

298 Tree Creeper

The information submitted suggests that this species is widespread but rather thinly distributed in suitable areas, an exception being Selsdon Wood where DS considered there were about ten pairs. Reports do not indicate that the severe weather had any marked effect on the species. No information was received for Hertfordshire.

M Inner London: one in Regent's Park on Sept. 2nd (EHW) and one in Holland Park on Nov. 26th (EPB).

299 Wren

There is almost unanimity on the serious reduction in numbers suffered by this species during the severe weather. At Dollis Hill, Middx., the breeding population was reduced from seven pairs to nil (ES). At Downe, Kent, the usual ten breeding pairs were absent. (RGB). In 40 acres of dense oakwood at Bookham Common with a population over the past three years of from 12 to 17 singing males none was heard until late May when one male appeared (GB). On Weybridge Heath, Surrey, GHG found only two pairs where normally there were 12-14.

Exceptions to the general decrease were at Highgate-Hampstead where MT stated there was no decrease; at East Molesey, only a little down in numbers (PJO) and S.W. London within the London County Council boundary where JG reported breeding in good numbers particularly in the cemeteries. Birds in the heavily built-up areas probably suffered less than those in rural areas, and Inner London maintained a breeding population, five pairs breeding in Regent's Park (RCG), and at least two pairs in Holland Park, where there were six singing males (EPB). There were few reports of breeding from rural areas.

302 Fieldfare

Hard-weather evacuations were most prominent in early January, with large movements obvious on the 5th, 6th and 7th. On these dates the recorded flight directions were usually into the S.W. quarter and the heaviest individual passage was that of c. 1,600 passing over Brent Res., Middx., in five hours on the 5th (LAB). Birds frequented gardens throughout the period of snow-cover.

Otherwise recorded up to May 4th and from Sept. 28th.

303 Song Thrush

Though only a very few were seen participating in the visible movements of other thrushes in January, a concentration of *c.* 200 (the highest count of the year) at Beddington S.F., Surrey, on the 6th provided clear evidence that this species was also concerned in the hard-weather evacuations.

Reports on the post-winter survival of breeding birds conflict: reports from Regent's Park, Inner London, and to the north of there in Highgate, Middx., indicated little or no change from the 1962 population levels, but comment from localities away from the centre of London, such as Dollis Hill, Middx., and Leatherhead, Surrey, suggested a serious reduction in numbers. This was also stated to be the position in Kent.

A pair bred at St. George's Gardens, Bloomsbury; only the second case of breeding in an Inner London square since the war.

304 Redwing

Pattern of hard-weather evacuations similar to that of Fieldfare, with heaviest individual passage that of *c.* 700 passing S. over Brent Res., Middx., in five hours on Jan. 5th (LAB). The numbers present at Beddington S.F. during this period were unprecedented, increasing from *c.* 200 on the 5th to *c.* 5,000 on the 8th and with *c.* 1,000 still present on the 13th. The second count mentioned here is the largest single concentration of this species ever recorded in the London Area. Many birds took up residence in observers' gardens, showing considerable flexibility in diet by consuming a remarkable selection of foods. These included cheese, meat, rice (pudding), cake, melon and, of course, a well-known proprietary bird food! Weights of several birds caught by GB in his garden and feeding on such fare at Esher indicated an average gain of about 10 grammes (from 62 to 72 grammes) between the third week of January and mid-February.

A bird seen by FR in Epping Forest on Sept. 16th constitutes the earliest autumn record for the London Area.

307 Ring Ouzel

M Inner London: Holland Park, a cock from Apr. 20th to 22nd (EPB).

S Croydon Airport, a cock on Apr. 11th (CDH). Richmond Park, a cock and a hen on Apr. 12th (IRB).

308 Blackbird

Not an obvious participant in the hard-weather movements of the winter and, apart from a known reduction in the breeding population of Dollis Hill, Middx., from 185-195 pairs to 86-87 pairs (ES), there appeared to be no change in the level of the breeding population and later favourable comments on breeding success came from Potters Bar, Middx., Regent's and Holland Park, Inner London, and Hersham S.F., Surrey.

Two recoveries abroad of birds ringed in the London Area were notified during the year: a first winter male ringed at Biggin Hill, Kent, on Jan. 28th, 1962, was recovered on Mar. 18th, 1963, at Saurbal, Sorndal, Rogaland, Norway. One ringed at Elmers End S.F. on Mar. 11th, 1963, was recovered at Njorted, Smaland, Sweden, on July 15th, 1963.

311 Wheatear

Birds seen outside normal passage periods were an early hen at Swanscombe, Kent, on Mar. 9th (RSB, CEW) and one at Elmers End S.F., Kent, on Nov. 24th (TK).

317 Stonechat

Of only ten records received, seven fall within known migration periods so that in the year under review, this species was extremely rare in winter and failed to breed at all (cf. *L.B.R.*, 26: 48 and 27: 44). Thus the drastic national decline noted after the winter of 1961-62 affected the London Area too.

318 Whinchat

Records of a widespread passage in the first week of May came from 12 localities throughout the London Area.

At least eight pairs bred.

320 Redstart

More observations were received than in recent years and it is clear that at least 90 cocks held territory for some time at eleven localities. At least 59 pairs attempted to breed, the biggest concentration being as usual in Epping Forest where JAB found 56 singing birds between Apr. 19th and July 11th.

321 Black Redstart

All records are given.

E/M Stepney, one pair bred rearing three young (MW, per RH).

H Moor Park, Rickmansworth, one pair with fledged young and a second brood in the nest on June 18th (MC). Northaw, a hen on Aug. 9th (TJ, JL).

M Brent Res., a hen on Apr. 6th and 19th (LAB, DC). King George VI Res., a hen or immature on Nov. 16th (MC). Inner London: with considerable disturbance continuing in the former stronghold of this species, it was rather surprising that, as in 1962, four cock birds returned to the few remaining bombed sites. Three of these found mates and breeding took place at Cripplegate (St. Giles's), Barbican (New Zealand Avenue), and near Moor Lane; a solitary cock sang over Beech Street for a time and then became itinerant in the general area. The first birds were seen on Apr. 18th, the last on Oct. 21st (PHFB, REFP, RBW *et al.*). The only other records for Inner London were of solitary cocks at Westminster from Apr. 11th to 30th (GHG) and at Bloomsbury on July 2nd (EHW).

- K Elmers End S.F., a hen on May 12th (TK).
 S Beddington S.F. and Croydon Power Station, one pair present from Apr. 14th bred, rearing two broods (MSA, RSB, SDT); a hen on Oct. 13th (CDH). Holmethorpe, a hen trapped on Mar. 31st (DW).

322 Nightingale

Detailed records are given this year in the hope that observers will continue to make systematic records of this species and that an accurate index of population can be maintained.

- E Belhus Park, Aveley, six cocks located (MJA). Epping Forest, sixteen cocks located (RTB). Lea Valley, between Sewardstone and Waltham Abbey, about nine cocks located in an enclosed area (where the species may have bred for some time) (per BSMs). Newbury Park, single birds trapped on Aug. 7th and 13th (MPT).
 H Broxbourne Woods, 12 cocks in song in one area of two acres alone on May 12th (BSMs). Northaw Greatwood, four pairs only noted (TJ); a serious reduction from previous years when "at least 20 pairs could be located" (per BLS).
 M Scratch Wood, two on June 1st (LAB). Inner London: Regent's Park, a migrant on Sept. 6th (RCG, DIMW).
 K No records received.
 S Addington, one trapped on Aug. 19th (DS). Ashtead Forest, one pair and a singing cock during breeding season (EJC). Beddington S.F., one on Aug. 28th (BRS). Bookham Common, two cocks singing during breeding season (GB, AME, AJH). Bransland Wood, south of Bletchingley, one on Apr. 25th; birds also present here in spring of 1962 (CK). Esher, one singing at Princes Coverts on May 18th (WRI). Feltham Downs, two on Apr. 28th (TB). Headley Heath, one singing on May 23rd (GMC). Kingswood, one on June 28th (SDT).

324 Bluethroat

- S Beddington S.F., one, considered to be a first winter hen, on Sept. 22nd (JC, CDH, KO, ADP). The fifth record for the London Area.

325 Robin

Reports of serious reductions in breeding populations came from Dollis Hill, Middx. (ES) and in Surrey, from Addington, Chelsham and Farleigh (HEP). At Bookham Common the number of singing males in a 40 acre sample of oakwood fell from 32 to 21-22, reaching a level similar to that obtaining after the winter of 1947 (GB).

327 Grasshopper Warbler

Recorded in four counties but in much smaller numbers than in 1961 and 1962 with records of singing males as follows: Essex (one), Herts. (four), Middx. (one) and Surrey (four). No more than two of these birds were known to be paired and no young were seen.

343 Blackcap

At least one breeding pair and two singing cocks were present in Holland Park, Inner London, during the breeding season and young were being fed on June 15th (EPB).

347 Whitethroat

At Thornwood Common, Essex, there were no less than 44 migrant warblers in half a mile of hedges and ditches on Aug. 5th; 36 were of this species (DIMW).

348 Lesser Whitethroat

Breeding pairs or singing cocks were noted as settled at two localities in Essex (with breeding proven in Epping Forest for the second year running), at two in Herts., at three in Middx., at three in Kent and at fifteen in Surrey. One, occasionally two, cocks sang in Regent's Park, Inner London, between May 17th and 29th (HBF, RCG, DIMW). As in 1962, prominent on autumn migration: at Addington, Surrey, this species was "as common as Whitethroat" (DS). Records from Bishop's Park, Fulham, totalled 11 bird/days between Aug. 4th and Sept. 7th (PJSn) and those from Regent's Park, Inner London, 21 bird/days between Aug. 6th and Sept. 22nd (several observers). See *Birds of the London Area*, Revised Edition, p. 321.

356 Chiffchaff

No records have been submitted for the months of January and February, as might be expected! However, the first spring migrants were being reported before the final disappearance of the snow cover with one, together with an unidentified *Phylloscopus*, at Alderbourne, Bucks., on Mar. 9th and 10th (REE, DIMW) and one at Holmethorpe, Surrey, on the latter date (DW). By Mar. 19th a further 12 localities had received their first birds and passage was obvious after the 24th. In December, there was one at Stocker's Lake, Herts., on the 15th, 21st and 22nd (IGJ), another at Worcester Park S.F., Surrey, on the 22nd (MJCa), and one at Beddington S.F., on the 11th (BRS).

357 Wood Warbler

Breeding season records outside normal passage periods are given in detail.

- E Epping Forest, three cocks in song between May 6th and June 2nd (JAB, JCE).
- H Northaw Greatwood, a cock singing on May 25th, but not found again (GTH).
- M Stanmore Common, two cocks in song in May and June (EHW).
- K Near Downe, a cock in song on June 15th (CHD). Hayes Common, a cock in song from May 31st to June 8th (AWB). Hosey Common, a cock in song on May 31st (RGB). Shoreham, a cock in song on May 26th (RVW).

- S Ditton Common, a cock in song on June 22nd (WRI). Esher Common, at least one cock in song between May 26th and June 26th, and two birds on June 23rd (JG, RH, IGM, IBM). Kingswood, a nest with six eggs found on June 5th (RCH). Weybridge, a pair with four flying young on Aug. 5th (GHG).

Summarizing the above records, it appears that no less than 14 cock wood warblers were singing in suitable breeding habitat at some time during the summer, eight making extended stays and at least two attracting mates and breeding, one successfully, cf. *L.B.R.*, 27, 47.

Records of passage migrants total a further five birds in spring and two in autumn.

364 Goldcrest

Reports of drastic reductions or complete absence of normal breeding populations came from N. and N.W. Middlesex (EHW): in Kent, from Foots Cray Meadows (CHD), Joyden's Wood (RWC), Pett's Wood (RWC, KHP) and the county in general (BGB, KHP) and in Surrey, from Arbrook Common and Ashted Forest (EJC, WRI), Bookham Common (GB, EJC, WRI), Burgh Heath (RHBF), East Molesey (JRK, PJO), Esher and Esher Common (EJC, WRI), Gatton (HB), Godstone (MSA), Kingswood (MSA) and Leatherhead (TB).

It follows that records of breeding birds were very few, totalling *no more than ten* adults at seven localities (all but one in Surrey). More surprisingly records of autumn passage were also few, coming from only three localities.

368 Pied Flycatcher

Migrant records outside the centre of London only numbered fourteen, less than half the equivalent figure for 1962. However the heavy passage of this species reported on the E. coast of Britain in early September was clearly reflected by simultaneous arrivals of birds in Holland and Regent's Parks on the 1st, and at the latter locality an extended passage which lasted from Aug. 30th to Sept. 29th. During this period alone, records totalled no less than 52 bird/days and at least 30 different individuals passed through (HBF, RCG, RHK, DIMW).

The most extraordinary record of this species in the year under review was the discovery of a family party of six in Golders Hill Park on July 16th (EHW). Though they had not bred in the immediate vicinity, it seems unlikely that by this date the birds could have come far from their breeding place.

371 Hedge Sparrow

Apart from a decrease noted by ES in the breeding population of Dollis Hill, Middx., where only 25-30 pairs were present compared to *c.* 48 pairs in 1962, this species seemed to cope much better with the exceptional winter than most small passerines,

375 Tawny Pipit

M Perry Oaks S.F., two in the second half of September; an immature (with streaked breast) from the 15th to the 18th (REE, GCG, BVMO, JMS, DIMW) and an adult on the 22nd (CMV).

These are only the second and third records for the London Area, but are less surprising when the considerable influx of this species into England in the autumn of 1963 is remembered.

376 Tree Pipit

An exceptionally early bird was both heard and seen by RCG in Regent's Park, Inner London, on Mar. 21st. The next spring migrant was not recorded until three weeks later.

379 Water Pipit

H West Hyde G.P., single birds with the characters of *spinoletta* on Feb. 24th (IGJ) and on Dec. 21st, 28th and 29th (MC, IGJ, BPP).

Although this race had only been recorded six times in the London Area between 1900 and 1954, records for the years from 1955 to 1963 total 34.

380a Pied Wagtail

Though the British race of this species commonly migrates through the London Area, a south bound passage of 23 in half an hour over Danson Park, Kent, on Oct. 5th (RVW) suggested a remarkably heavy movement.

381 Grey Wagtail

Breeding season records were submitted for Surrey only, where five or six pairs were noted, and it now seems clear that there has been a distinct ebb in the breeding population since 1961.

382 Yellow Wagtail

All records of birds with the characters of races other than *flavissima* (Yellow) are given.

E Girling Res., a cock *flava* (Blue-headed) on Apr. 24th (JCE).

M Brent Res., a cock *beema* (Syke's) on Apr. 14th (LAB), a cock and hen *flava* on May 2nd and 8th (LAB) and a cock *flava* on May 17th and 18th (LAB, EHW). Perry Oaks S.F., four or five birds resembling *cinereocapilla* (Ashy-headed) during summer (JRH).

S Beddington S.F., a cock and hen *flava* in close association on May 26th and June 2nd (ADP, SDT) and a cock *beema* on May 26th, June 4th and July 30th (ADP). the last being seen in the same field as two variant hens which were paired to normal cock *flavissima*.

383 Waxwing

K Ruxley, one on Dec. 1st (FJH). Sidcup, four on Jan. 29th (per kos).

384 Great Grey Shrike

E Epping Forest, one on Dec. 13th (FE, EJ, BH, FR).

388 Red-backed Shrike

All records and comments are given.

- E Epping Forest, not found during the year under review (BSMs).
- H East Barnet, a pair with young on July 15th (BSMs).
- B Denham, a hen on Aug. 14th (PMS).
- K Elmers End S.F., a cock on May 5th (TK, PM). Stone, a pair in June and July, with a newly fledged juvenile on July 3rd and 4th: the cock was different from either cock recorded here in 1962, both of which were ringed (CEW).
- S Banstead Downs, a cock on May 26th (WRI) and June 29th (AJH). Banstead Wood, a cock on June 14th (IBM). Bookham Common, a pair in June and July built two nests, but both were apparently robbed (EJC, WRI, WDM). Chipstead, a cock on June 3rd (PJSN) and a pair on July 30th and 31st (LIC). Croydon Airport, a cock on July 31st (CDH). Epsom Common, a pair with nest and young in July (MJCD, KDE). Farthing Down, a pair present during most of breeding season (SDT). Headley Heath, a cock on July 5th (PAA). Leatherhead, two pairs bred successfully, rearing eight young in total (MLC). Nork, a pair from June 1st to 23rd (IBM, IGM). Old Coulsdon, a cock on May 30th and 31st and a pair seen feeding two young on Sept. 6th (AJH). Tadworth, a pair during breeding season but success unknown (HB). Wey Manor Farm, a cock on July 14th and Aug. 5th (GHG). Woldingham, a cock at one locality on June 3rd and 9th; a cock at another locality on June 30th and a pair with one young there in July (IGM).

Assuming the same coverage of this species' habitat in the year under review as in 1962 (and records of other species from former Red-backed Shrike localities support such an assumption), it appears that the known breeding population of the London Area decreased overall by eleven pairs in the year under review.

389 Starling

Details of country roosts are rarely submitted and therefore the counts made by BC and BPP at Ruislip Common were welcome: up to 30,000 were present in January, the number increasing in February to *c.* 50,000, and *c.* 30,000 were seen in the following December.

391 Hawfinch

Breeding season records, a note on large numbers and a record for Inner London are given.

- E Epping Forest, two, possibly three pairs are known to have bred (RTB, FR); large numbers were present during the period Aug. 29th to Oct. 9th, maximum 62 on Sept. 2nd (FR). Thorndon Park, four on Apr. 13th (AFH). Wanstead, three on May 3rd (FRT).
- H Broxbourne, two on June 2nd (EHW). Mimms Wood, two on May 2nd and 26th (MPI, BLS). Northaw, one at Nyn Park on Apr. 30th (BLS).

- M Bentley Priory, one pair (EHW). Stanmore Common, a male on Apr. 28th (LAB). Stanwell, two in Spout Wood on May 4th (AQ). Inner London: one in Regent's Park on Sept. 17th (DIMW).
- K Chislehurst, one on May 11th and July 5th at Marlings Park (KHP). Downe, one on Apr. 30th (KHP). Foots Cray meadows a pair on Apr. 23rd and one on June 29th (CHD, KHP).
- S Caterham, at least three pairs in the area, but breeding not proved (CK). Kew Gardens, three on Apr. 16th (Parks' Report). Old Coulsdon, an adult in the Happy Valley on May 30th (SDT). Reigate, two adults feeding a juvenile on July 14th (DW). Sanderstead and Kenley Woods, single birds seen during the period March-June (AJH). Selsdon Wood, one pair bred unsuccessfully (HEP). Walton Park Wood, one on Apr. 17th (JAF).

392 Greenfinch

This species does not appear to have suffered during the severe weather, but several observers noted larger numbers than usual visiting their gardens. GB at Esher, Surrey, trapped 295 in the period from December, 1962, to March, 1963, and found that the average weight of a sample of those trapped in January and February was slightly higher than those trapped in the same months in three previous milder winters. BH and AH ringed 53 individuals in a small garden at Highgate in January and February.

The ring of a bird ringed on 27th January, 1962, at Elmers End S.F. Kent, was recovered from an owl pellet at Westerham, Kent, on 1st May, 1963 (PM).

- M/S Bred in Inner London at Holland Park, probably three pairs (EPB), Regent's Park, 20-25 pairs (DIMW), Hyde Park, four singing males (EHW) and Lambeth Palace Gardens, one pair (GHG).

394 Siskin

Unusually numerous at the beginning of the year with *c.* 100 on Jan. 13th near Denham (DIMW), and parties of from 10 to 61 in sixteen other localities. On Apr. 8th at Oxshott Woods JæRK estimated there were certainly 150 and possibly well over 200. A male was still present at Cobham, Surrey, on May 3rd (RFP). At the end of the year, the maxima reported were 50 in two flocks at Thorpe, Surrey, on Dec. 21st (GHG), and 50-60 at Ashted Woods, Surrey, on Dec. 29th (RSB).

Inner London records are given in full below.

- M Inner London: Regent's Park, one on Feb. 16th and 17th and two on the 24th; one on Oct. 26th (RCG). Bloomsbury, one on Feb. 15th (EHW).

395 Linnet

- M Inner London: the flock of *c.* 30 at Cripplegate in the City on 31st December, 1962 (see *L.B.R.* No. 27) had increased to 50 on Jan. 1st,

but fell to *c.* 25 on the 2nd, 12 on the 3rd and 4th, and only one remained on the 11th (PEF, RBW).

396 Twite

- E Rainham Marsh, four on Jan. 6th (AFH).
- K Swanscombe Marsh, four on Feb. 24th, two on Mar. 2nd and one on the 3rd (BEC, PJO, KHP *et al.*)

397 Redpoll

Breeding season and Inner London records are given.

- E Epping Forest, a colony of six, probably eight pairs in the N.W. corner of the Forest in May/July (DIMW); two pairs reported by JCF and JT in May and June must be additional.
- M Hampstead, a family party at Kenwood on Aug. 1st (MT). Stanmore, two pairs bred (EHW). Inner London: Regent's Park, three flying N.W. on Jan. 6th; seven on Oct. 19th and two on the 29th (RCG). Green Park, single birds on Oct. 17th, 25th and 27th (DFM).
- K Chislehurst, one pair bred at Marlings Park, rearing three young (KHP). Hayes Park, one pair reared three young (RGB). Westerham, a pair on May 5th (RGB). West Wickham, a pair on May 7th. (DH).
- S Banstead Downs, two or three singing on May 26th, two pairs on July 21st (WRI). Esher Common, *c.* six pairs on July 7th, one building a nest (EJC, WRI). Headley Heath, two pairs in the breeding season (HB). Littleworth Common, a male singing on May 25th and 28th (WRI). Oxshott, at least three pairs at Princes Coverts (DP). Reigate, one pair May to July (DW). Shirley, a pair on May 4th and a pair in a different area in July (RGB). Tadworth, one pair, and Walton Heath, two pairs (HB).

401 Bullfinch

Small parties were numerous in October to December, but whether this was due to resident birds flocking or an influx from outside the Area was not clear.

404 Crossbill

The considerable irruption of this species into the London Area from July, 1962, onwards was dealt with in the *L.B.R.* No. 27. Most of the birds had left the Area by the end of 1962. During the severe weather in January and February, 1963, from one to six were seen at Banstead, Kenley and Weybridge in Surrey, at Sevenoaks in Kent, Moor Park in Herts, and Harefield in Middx.

In the next three months there were reports from Esher and Oxshott in Surrey of up to seven during the period Mar. 16th to May 20th, but there were *c.* 30 on Mar. 31st and *c.* 20 on Apr. 2nd, but no evidence of breeding was obtained. At the small part of Wisley Common, Surrey, within the London Area, five were seen on Apr. 6th and 13 on Apr. 28th, while at Reigate Heath, Surrey, there was a party of 16 on May 11th.

North of the Thames, at Panshanger, Herts., where the species was reported to have bred, there were 32 on Apr. 24th and 12 on May 12th. Seven were also seen on Apr. 28th at Northaw Great Wood. The only record for June was of a pair with three juveniles at Banstead on the 13th.

From July onwards there was a further irruption into the Area, but on a much smaller scale than in 1962. There were many records from Banstead and adjacent areas of the North Downs up to the end of the year, the maximum being 20 on Nov. 13th to 16th at Banstead. Elsewhere in Surrey, five were seen at Limpsfield Chart on July 21st, 12 at Weybridge on Oct. 19th and Nov. 16th and five on Nov. 5th, and at Kew Gardens five to seven on several dates in November and December.

In Kent from one to five were reported from Sevenoaks, Petts Wood, Downe and Chislehurst.

North of the Thames, 47, the maximum for the year, were seen at Panshanger, Herts, on Sept. 7th and the same day there were 11 at Oaklands, near St. Albans, Herts, where one pair probably bred. Also in Herts., there were three at Totteridge on Oct. 6th and two at Northaw Great Wood on Dec. 22nd. In Middx., there were three at Mill Hill on July 28th, 10 at Heston on Aug. 5th, three flying over Regent's Park in Inner London on Aug. 10th, and three at Osterley in December. The only record for Essex was of 13 in Epping Forest on Aug. 5th.

407 Chaffinch

The main autumn passage of this prominent diurnal migrant was from Oct. 8th to 25th, but there was no correlation between peaks observed in different parts of the Area. The maximum reported was *c.* 1,300 migrating N.W. at Dollis Hill, Middx., on Oct. 18th (ES).

M/S Inner London: the breeding season distribution was Holland Park four pairs (EPB), Regent's Park, 18 pairs (DIMW), Hyde Park, two pairs, Kensington Gardens, two pairs (EHW).

408 Brambling

Widespread and numerous in the first three months of the year, but the largest flocks usually only of the order 40-60. The maximum was *c.* 140 at Kew Gardens, Surrey, on Jan. 12th (Parks Report).

Visits to gardens were a feature of this period, and the severe weather brought some 40 birds to Inner London where some were seen feeding on bread with sparrows in Archbishop's Park, Lambeth, and on crumbs and wheat near the Albert Memorial. They were much less numerous at the end of the year.

409 Yellowhammer

M Inner London: Regent's Park, single birds on Mar. 10th, Apr. 2nd and 4th (RCG, EHW).

410 Corn Bunting

Distribution in the breeding season is given. It appears likely that the absence of breeding season records for many areas in 1962 was due to lack of observation.

- B Singing males at Denham on June 9th (BPP), Horn Hill, four on June 16th (JRH), and Iver on June 9th (PFN, PJS).
- E Belhus Park, two or three pairs (AFH). Havering, a male and two females on July 23rd (JAB). North Ockenden, Cranham and Upminster area, 18 singing males (MJA).
- H Northaw, two July 20th (TJ, JL).
- M Osterley Park, c. 12 pairs nesting (DGH). Singing males also present at Cranford on May 13th (HJF), West Bedfont and Harmondsworth (DGH), and at Perry Oaks on Apr. 26th (CDH).
- K Singing males at Dartford Marshes, two on Apr. 28th (KHP), Horton Kirby, nine on May 27th (RVW), Sutton-at Hone, two on May 15th (KHP) and Eynsford, two on May 26th and one in a different area on June 4th (RVW).

421 Reed Bunting

- M Inner London: Regent's Park, one on Mar. 8th, two on the 22nd and one on Apr. 5th (RCG). Vincent Square, three on Mar. 6th (GHG).

There were several reports of birds in gardens during the severe weather.

423 Snow Bunting

- E King George V. Res., a male on Nov. 16th (JF). Rainham Marsh, one on Nov. 17th (JHB). Walthamstow Res., one on Feb. 2nd (RWG).
- M Waterlow Park, one on Mar. 9th (RCB).
- K Swanscombe Marsh, up to 16 from the beginning of the year until Mar. 10th (DJM *et al.*).
- S Barn Elms Res., a female on Dec. 24th (PFB). Holmethorpe G.P., one on Jan. 6th (DW). Queen Elizabeth II Res., one on Jan. 22nd and 23rd (MJCd, DP).

425 Tree Sparrow

Only additions to the breeding distribution given in the *L.B.R.* No. 27 for 1962 and records for Inner London are given.

- M Southgate, one pair bred (BSMs). Dollis Hill, two pairs (ES). Inner London: one at Cripplegate in the City on Jan. 10th (RBW). Kennington Gardens, one on Jan. 11th (PJM). Regent's Park, one on Mar. 2nd (RCG).
- S Banstead Woods, twelve seen entering and leaving holes on Apr. 30th (JHF). Farleigh, a small colony on May 5th (RHK).

Additions to the London Bird Report, 1962

- 29 Shag**
E Walthamstow, two were present from Feb. 24th (JF). Girling Res., one on Mar. 5th (JCE).
- 64 Common Scoter**
E Girling Res., a duck on July 29th (JCE).
- 70 Goosander**
H Hilfield Park Res., a pair on Aug. 15th (ASK, F. E. Mayhew).
- 91/92 Buzzard** (species not identified)
S Carshalton Beeches, one on Dec. 7th (JAR). Richmond Park, one moving S,W. on Nov. 24th (EDB, CES).
- 143 Turnstone**
E Rainham Marsh, one on Sept. 2nd (PFB).
- 155 Bar-tailed Godwit**
E King George V Res., one on Apr. 30th (JCE).
- 211 Kittiwake**
E Chigwell, one found dead on Mar. 7th (RECC). Girling Res., one Feb. 17th to 24th (JF, BSMS), and dead birds on Dec. 25th (one) and 26th (two), (JCE, JF).
- 274 Swallow**
The passage at Hersham S.F. was observed for two hours from 13.30 to 15.30 hrs.
- 275 House Martin**
The passage at Hersham S.F. was observed for two hours from 13.30 hours to 15.30 hours.
- 397 Redpoll**
E Four birds considered by the observer to show characters of the race *flammea* were seen in Epping Forest on Jan. 30th (RECC).
- 404 Crossbill**
H Northaw Great Wood, six on Oct. 31st (JJ). Rickmansworth, three in Moor Park on Aug. 10th (S.E. Crooks), six on Sept. 1st and 2nd and Dec. 18th *c.* 12 on Dec. 25th (R. Carden).

Corrections to the London Bird Report, 1962

The Year, page 5, second paragraph, line two, for grey geese read Brent Geese.

103 Osprey

E The bird was seen at Hanningfield (outside our Area) on May 1st not May 2nd.

165 Greenshank

M Delete record of four at Colnebrook G.P., Middx., on Nov. 18th. These were Green Sandpipers.

Collared Dove

E The Buckhurst Hill bird arrived in May, not April. The Ilford birds were present from Apr. not May.

259 Kingfisher

There were two autumn records for Fishers Green G.P.

271 Woodlark

S Inner London: for Archbishop's Palace read Archbishop's Park.

283 Jackdaw

For Kennings Way, Kensington, read Kenning's Way, Kennington, which is in Surrey not Middx.

371 Hedge Sparrow

For Lambeth Palace Gardens read Archbishop's Park, Lambeth.

389 Starling

The entry for Ruxley G.P. should appear under Kent, not Herts.

395 Linnet

For Lambeth Palace Gardens read Archbishop's Park, Lambeth.

404 Crossbill

S The pair with three juveniles at Esher Common were seen on July 7th not June 7th.

The Gull Roosts of the London Area

By BRYAN L. SAGE

Introduction

During the winter of 1952/1953 the British Trust for Ornithology organized an investigation into the wintering of gulls in Britain, based primarily on counts of birds at the roosting sites during the first ten days of January 1953. The London Area was covered in this survey, and the results obtained are discussed by Hickling (1954) and Homes (1955). The total roosting population of gulls in the London Area at this time was *c.* 86,000. Since this census two further reservoirs have been built in the Area; Hilfield Park Reservoir in Hertfordshire (Sage, 1958) and the Queen Elizabeth II (Walton South) Reservoir in Surrey, both of which rapidly attracted high numbers of roosting gulls.

Various factors suggest that since the census of 1952/1953 there has been an increase in the numbers of gulls wintering in the British Isles (see Hickling 1960). An attempt to hold a repeat census in the winter of 1962/1963 was defeated by the appalling weather conditions which caused the more or less complete freezing over of most reservoirs at the critical time. It was decided to carry out the census again in the latter half of December 1963, and this paper discusses the results obtained in the London Area. At this stage it may do no harm to repeat what has been said on previous occasions, namely that the estimation of the numbers of roosting gulls is a difficult business and all the figures presented must be regarded only as approximations.

Discussion

The **total roosting population** of gulls recorded in the Area in the January 1953 census, adjusted to include the revised figure for the William Girling and King George V Reservoirs based on a check census in January 1954 (as described by Homes *op. cit.*), was *c.* 86,000. The total for the December 1963 census was *c.* 221,000, an increase of *c.* 135,000 or 157%. The figures for all sites in both censuses are shown in Table 1. It is immediately apparent that a large proportion of this increase is due to the population of *c.* 100,000 birds reported from the new roost at the Queen Elizabeth II Reservoir, which is known to have attracted most of the gulls which formerly roosted at the Molesey/Walton group and Island Barn Reservoirs. The difference between the 1953 and the 1963 populations at these latter sites is, however, only 14,000 which accounts for only a small proportion of the Queen Elizabeth II roost.

There is, however, some doubt about the exact number of gulls roosting at the Queen Elizabeth II Reservoir in December 1963. Two separate estimates by different observers on succeeding days were received, one for

TABLE 1

APPROXIMATE NUMBERS OF GULLS ROOSTING IN THE
LONDON AREA IN JANUARY 1953 AND DECEMBER 1963

	Total		Black-headed Gull		Common Gull		Herring Gull		Greater Black-backed Gull		Lesser Black-backed Gull	
	1953	1963	1953	1963	1953	1963	1953	1963	1953	1963	1953	1963
Barns Elms	10,000 +	20,400	10,000	20,000	100	100	100	100	—	100	—	100
Island Barn	11,000 +	100	10,000	100	200	—	1,000	—	—	—	—	—
Queen Mary (Littleton)	17,500	24,000	10,250	8,000	1,750	8,000	5,500	7,000 ^B	—	500 ^B	—	500 ^B
Staines Res.	4,000	7,750 +	1,000	3,000	—	800	3,000	2,500	—	—	—	500
King Geo. VI	3,000	4,010	900	350	—	150	2,100	3,000	—	500 ^F	—	10
Molesey		300		100		—		100		—		100
(Chelsea and Lambeth W.W.)												
Walton	5,350	1,850	1,000	1,000	—	—	4,000	100	350	650	—	100
(Bessborough and Knight)												
Queen Elizabeth II Walton South)	—	100,000 ^D	—	92,500	—	—	—	7,000 ^C	—	250 ^C	—	250 ^C
Wm. Girling Res.	5,000 ^A	36,525	29,700	24,000	4,000	7,500	1,000	3,900	—	625	—	500
King George V	30,000 ^A				100 ^E	100 ^E	100 ^E	100 ^E	100 ^E	100 ^E	—	—
Walthamstow Res.	—	474	—	250	—	30	—	112	—	—	—	82
Hilfield Park Res.	—	25,530	—	16,000	—	2,000	—	5,000	—	2,500	—	30
		85,850 + 220,939 +										

NOTES.— A = based on a February 1954 check census.

B = a total of 8,000 for these three species arbitrarily allocated.

C = a total of 7,500 for these three species arbitrarily allocated.

D = for a discussion of this figure see the text.

E = a total of 300 for these three species equally allocated.

F = on Dec. 22nd c. 800 were estimated to be roosting at this reservoir.

c. 50,000 and the other for *c.* 250,000+. When the second count was made the observer estimated that at least a quarter of this 317 acre reservoir was covered by a vast pack of gulls, or “. . . the largest collection of birds I have ever seen anywhere in my life” to use the observer’s own words. It may be mentioned that the weather conditions were more favourable on the day of the second count. In cases like this where two very experienced observers obtain such widely differing results it is difficult to know which figure to work on. As a reasonable compromise I have taken the figure of 100,000 for the purpose of all discussions in this paper. A check by a third observer was made at this reservoir on March 7th, 1964, and he estimated 35,000-40,000. It must be borne in mind however that the peak roosting population in the London Area is reached in late December and January, so that the March figure certainly represents an under-estimate in this respect. A census by M. J. Carter at this reservoir on February 3rd, 1963, gave a total population of *c.* 60,000, but this figure cannot be used as a standard of comparison due to the highly abnormal weather conditions prevailing at that time. It is impossible to explain the difference between the two December 1963 counts, I do not think that two experienced observers could diverge so much in accuracy despite the known difficulties of this type of census work. Possibly the 24 hours or so between the counts saw a large influx of additional birds from elsewhere, we do not know. It will be necessary to have a check census at this site in future winters before coming to any definite conclusions.

The situation at the **Lea Valley reservoirs** is interesting. In a detailed study of the gull roosts at these reservoirs Meadows (1961) demonstrated that a considerable increase in the population had occurred between 1954 and 1958-1960, this is illustrated by the figures in Table 2 based on this paper.

TABLE 2

ROOSTING POPULATION OF GULLS AT THE WILLIAM GIRLING
AND KING GEORGE V RESERVOIRS IN CERTAIN YEARS

Date	13-16/2/54	6/12/58	19-20/12/59	16-18/12/60	28-29/12/60
Totals	35,000	54,758	61,919	58,790	81,095

Taking all acceptable counts from Meadows’ paper for the months of November to February inclusive for the years 1958-1960, the average winter population of all species over this period was 61,200. In comparison with the December 1963 total of 36,525 it seems possible that between December 1958-1960 and 1963 the population decreased by *c.* 24,675 or 40%. If, however, the fluctuations of the intervening years are ignored, then between January 1954 and December 1963 the population at these reservoirs increased by 4%. At the moment there seems no acceptable explanation of why the Lea Valley reservoirs’ population should have decreased so sharply between December 1960 and December 1963, or why the overall increase from 1954-1963 is so small at 4%. The figures in Table 1 for the Staines group of reservoirs for instance shows an increase of about 46% in the total

roosting population between the winters of 1952/1953 and 1963/1964. So far as is known there is no connection at all between the gull populations of the Lea Valley reservoirs' and those in the Molesey/Walton area, so it is impossible to postulate a shift of population to account for the great increase at the latter. It is clear that further counts will have to be made at the Lea Valley reservoirs during the winter of 1964/1965 in order to check the December 1963 count. It may be that there is a trend towards a shift in population, and a possible factor in this could be the 1,000 acre reservoir at Hanningfield in extra-metropolitan Essex. This reservoir apparently did not support a regular gull roost until the winter of 1962/63, and counts made during December 1963 gave a total of *c.* 14,700 roosting Black-headed Gulls (S. Hudgell per G. A. Pyman). It is probable that a large proportion of these birds would formerly have gone to the Lea Valley reservoirs to roost. There may well be some connection between the Lea Valley reservoirs and Hilfield Park Reservoir, certainly the feeding areas of both populations overlap and some direct movement between the two sites has been noticed. The Hilfield Park Reservoir roost has been increasing steadily since 1956, as is demonstrated by the figures shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

TOTAL NUMBERS OF GULLS ROOSTING AT HILFIELD PARK RESERVOIR
IN CERTAIN YEARS

Date	Jan. 1956	Jan. 1957	Jan. 1958	Jan. 1960	Dec. 1963
Total	8,142	9,325	15,000	21,000	25,530
% increase over previous year	—	14	61	40	22

(increase from January 1956 - December 1963 = 214%)

The increase of 214% in the Hilfield Park Reservoir population over a period of seven years cannot be compared with the situation at the other London reservoirs, as this reservoir was only used as a roost for the first time in 1956. Much of the increase must be due to the normal rise in population at a newly-colonized roosting site and does not reflect an overall increasing population trend on this scale.

We can now consider the situation regarding changes in the total roosting population of **individual species** in the London Area, which in all cases show an increase. The comparative figures are given in Table 4.

TABLE 4

TOTAL ROOSTING POPULATION OF INDIVIDUAL SPECIES IN THE
LONDON AREA, 1952/53 - 1963/64

	<i>Black-headed Gull</i>	<i>Common Gull</i>	<i>Herring Gull</i>	<i>Greater Black- backed Gull</i>	<i>Lesser Black backed Gull</i>
1952/53	62,850	6,150	16,800	450	0
1963/64	165,300	18,580	28,812	6,075	2,172
% inc.	163	202	71	1250	—

It is clear that the increase in the **Black-headed Gull** population is almost entirely accounted for by the Queen Elizabeth II Reservoir return, and that of Hilfield Park Reservoir. Neither of these reservoirs were in existence in 1952/1953, and in fact the former was only filled as recently as 1962. D. Parr states that all but a minority of the Black-headed Gulls that formerly roosted at Island Barn now go to the Queen Elizabeth II Reservoir. The figures in Table 1 show that the Barn Elms population of this species has apparently doubled since 1952/1953, whilst that of the Lea Valley reservoirs has dropped by *c.* 5,000.

A considerable increase in the **Common Gull** population seems to have taken place, centred primarily round the populations at the Queen Mary Reservoir, *c.* 6,000, the Lea Valley reservoirs *c.* 3,500, and Hilfield Park Reservoir *c.* 2,000. As Sage (1960) has shown that the spring passage influx of this species does not begin until late January at the earliest, it is clear that this is a genuine increase in the winter population. The data in Hickling (1960) suggests that there has been an increase in the numbers of this species in the Wash in recent years. It is worth noting that a comparison of the Lea Valley reservoirs population figures for 1952/1953 and 1963/1964 shows an increase of *c.* 7,500 or about 83% during this period. During the years 1958-1960 however the average winter population was *c.* 10,500.

The **Herring Gull** shows the lowest rate of increase, and what there is is mainly accounted for by the populations at the Queen Elizabeth II, Hilfield Park, and Lea Valley reservoirs. The winter population at the latter site in 1963/1964 was more than treble the 1952/1953 figure, but even so it is substantially below the average population for the years 1958-1960 when it was *c.* 9,500. This is another species which is believed to have increased in the Wash in recent years.

The most recent and startling development of all has been the increase in the numbers of Greater and Lesser Black-backed Gulls wintering in the London Area. The **Greater Black-backed Gull** was recorded in small numbers from only two or three sites in the 1952/1953 census, yet a glance at Table 4 shows how great the increase has been. As is shown in Table 1 the largest concentrations in 1963/1964 were at Hilfield Park Reservoir (2,500) and Staines Reservoir (950). In the Lea Valley this species has only formed a noticeable part of the roosting population in the last six years or so, the average population for 1958-1960 being 140. On January 25th-26th, 1958, however there were *c.* 250 roosting, and on December 16th, 1961, *c.* 700. Hilfield Park Reservoir had a roosting population of 150 in January 1958, so it can be seen that the subsequent increase has been very great indeed. The Molesey/Walton group held a roosting population of 360 on January 22nd, 1958, a figure which reflected little change over that of 1952/1953. In the case of the **Lesser Black-backed Gull** the apparent increase appears to be an absolute one as it did not figure in the 1952/1953 census at all. However, a few individuals could have been overlooked or present at sites not covered in the census. A very few birds of this species had begun wintering in the London Area as far back as 1949/1950, as

recorded by Barnes (1952). Generally speaking it is a far more recent addition to the wintering population of the Area than the Greater Black-backed Gull. In the Lea Valley it first began roosting in significant numbers during the winter of 1954/1955, and the average population from 1958-1960 was *c.* 750. The winter of 1954/1955 was apparently significant in the history of this species, up to 81 were present at Beddington sewage farm (*Brit. Birds*, xlviii, 370) and Davis (1955) reported the highest ever winter population in north Somerset. In December 1955 up to 400+ were recorded at Beddington sewage farm (*L.B.R.*, 1955, 23) and *c.* 300 on January 24th 1958 (*L.B.R.*, 1958, 29). The cold spell of January 12th-17th, 1959, brought *c.* 1,500 to the London Area (*L.B.R.*, 1959, 36).

Acknowledgments

I am most grateful to the following observers who took part in the census and provided much useful data:— R. S. Brown, J. Fitzpatrick, S. Greenwood, P. B. Lowe, B. Marsh, R. H. May, B. S. Meadows, A. Nixon, C. Ogston, D. Parr.

Summary

The results of a census of roosting gulls in the London Area during the winter of 1963/1964 are discussed, and the figures are compared with those obtained in the previous census of 1952/1953. Taking the population at the Queen Elizabeth Reservoir as *c.* 100,000 the recent census figures show an increase of *c.* 135,000 over those of 1952/1953. The populations of all the individual species show an increase, lowest in the Herring Gull and greatest in the Greater and Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

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The Bird Life of Holland Park 1962-1963

By E. P. BROWN

Summary

- (1) Material received since 1961 relating to the 1920/36 period and to 1915 is discussed and a revised table for 1920/36 is given (cf. *London Bird Report* No. 26). The probable breeding of the Coal Tit in 1921 is particularly noted.
- (2) Tables of Breeding Species, Species Observed and May Census figures are given for 1962 and 1963 and the records are analysed in the light of the hard winter of 1962/63. These show in particular that there was no diminution in the number of Wrens or Robins.
- (3) The conditions in the Park during the cold weather of 1963 are noted. Food and water was provided by the Park staff and the public and the effect of the cold weather is considered in this light. Few dead birds were found. Wood Pigeons increased considerably in numbers. Blue Tits, Blackbirds, Robins, Hedge Sparrows, Starlings and House Sparrows diminished slightly. Wrens, Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Jays, Nuthatches, Coal Tits, Great Tits and Mistle Thrushes did not change in numbers. A Greenfinch fluctuation was usual at that time of year and the Song Thrushes, while slightly fewer during the cold weather, were normal by April. A number of species were recorded singing during the cold and the Great Spotted Woodpecker drummed.
- (4) The beneficial activities of the Park staff and the public are considered to have contributed materially to the well being of the birds.

The Period 1920/36

As a result of my paper on Holland Park in the *London Bird Report*, No. 26 for 1961, some letters from the late A. Holte Macpherson and J. Rudge Harding to the late Dowager Countess of Ilchester concerning the birds of the Park between 1915 and 1932 were sent to me, through the courtesy of *Country Life* by Mr. R. C. Colby.

These letters reveal that in 1921 Rudge Harding saw a family of Coal Tits; this is of particular interest in view of the regular appearance of this species in Holland Park since 1952, though there appears to be no record of them during the intervening period. The Coal Tit is also included in a list of birds recorded in Holland Park in the spring of 1915. This list comprises: Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Hedge Sparrow, Wren, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Pied Wagtail, Crow, Starling, Wood Pigeon and Tawny Owl. There is no mention of breeding in connection with this list but all these with the exception of the Chiffchaff have been recorded as breeding during the past five years, and the Chiffchaff has been recorded on passage. To this list must be added the breeding in 1915 of a pair of Lesser Whitethroats (*The Birds of the London Area*) which species probably also bred in 1920 and 1921.

The letters refer to the commonness of the Greenfinch in the Park as compared with the other London Parks and much is said about the Great Spotted Woodpecker. There is no reference to Jays before 1928. Both the Garden Warbler and Cuckoo were frequently recorded as passage

migrants and other isolated observations of interest were those of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Bullfinch and Wood Warbler in 1923 and Turtle Doves in 1926 and 1928. The letters also confirm the breeding in the 1920/36 period of some of the commoner species which hitherto had been recorded as probably breeding. They record the Chiffchaff as breeding in 1927 and as present in most years between 1920 and 1932. The tables for 1920/36 published in the 1961 *London Bird Report* follow, amended in accordance with the supplementary information summarised above.

TABLE 1
BREEDING SPECIES
(cf. *L.B.R.* 26 for 1961: 65. Table 1)

<i>Name of Species</i>	1920-1936
Mallard	B
Sparrow Hawk	
Moorhen	B
Stock Dove	B
Wood Pigeon	B
Feral Pigeon	
Tawny Owl	B
Green Woodpecker	O
Great Spotted Woodpecker	B
Carrion Crow	B
Jay	b
Great Tit	B
Blue Tit	B
Coal Tit	b
Marsh Tit	
Nuthatch	
Wren	B
Mistle Thrush	B
Song Thrush	B
Blackbird	B
Robin	B
Blackcap	B
Whitethroat	
Lesser Whitethroat	b
Willow Warbler	B
Chiffchaff	B
Spotted Flycatcher	B
Hedge Sparrow	B
Pied Wagtail	
Starling	B
Greenfinch	B
Goldfinch	O
Chaffinch	B
House Sparrow	b
	—
	26
	—

B — Bred
b — Probably bred
O — Observed

(With acknowledgment to the *Reports on Bird Sanctuaries in the Royal Parks*)

TABLE 2

SPECIES OBSERVED

(cf. *L.B.R.*, 26 for 1961 : 66. Table 2)

<i>Name of Species</i>	1920-1936
Heron	○
Mute Swan	
Peregrine	
Kestrel	○
Lapwing	○
Woodcock	
Black-headed Gull	
Turtle Dove	○
Cuckoo	○
Swift	
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	○
Skylark	
Swallow/Martin	
Jackdaw	○
Long-tailed Tit	
Treecreeper	
Redwing	○
Redstart	○
Garden Warbler	○
Wood Warbler	○
Goldcrest	
Pied Flycatcher	
Grey Wagtail	
Hawfinch	○
Redpoll	
Bullfinch	○
Brambling	

○ — Observed

(With acknowledgments to the *Reports on Bird Sanctuaries in the Royal Parks*)**The years 1962 and 1963***Breeding Species and Species Observed*

In view of the abnormally cold winter of 1962/63 Tables 3, 4 and 5 are of considerable interest when looked at in conjunction with the tables for the preceding years (*L.B.R.*, 26 for 1961 : 65, 66 and 81).

The breeding species lists show a maximum total for 1960, but apart from the disappearance of the Willow Warbler the changes are of little significance and certainly were not affected in any way by the cold weather. The Coal Tit although missing from the 1961 list bred again in 1962 and 1963, and the Carrion Crow, always present, merely often chooses a tree outside the confines of the Park. The Blackcap, absent in 1962, bred again in 1963 though in any event this migrant species could only have been affected by the cold weather had its habitat suffered any drastic change thereby. It is, however, beginning to look as though the Willow Warbler has deserted the Park as a breeding species, and this in spite of the co-operation of the Park Superintendent who has postponed scything of the former breeding area until July. Again, however, this cannot be attributed

to the weather. These birds pass through the Park in spring and autumn and if disturbance is eliminated some other factor, perhaps a food one, must be operating. The Whitethroat, Pied Wagtail and Goldfinch were all isolated records and are unlikely to recur, particularly as the areas of the Park comprised in Zone 4 (*L.B.R.* 26 for 1961 : 64) are now being drastically altered, and in particular part of the nursery which all these species favoured. This alteration may also affect the Greenfinch which bred in the nursery area.

TABLE 3

BREEDING SPECIES

(cf. *L.B.R.* 26, for 1961 : 65. Table 1)

<i>Name of Species</i>	1962	1963
Mallard	B	B
Sparrowhawk		
Stock Dove		
Wood Pigeon	B	B
Feral Pigeon	B	B
Tawny Owl	B	B
Green Woodpecker		
Great Spotted Woodpecker	B	B
Carrion Crow	B	O
Jay	B	b
Great Tit	B	B
Blue Tit	B	B
Coal Tit	B	B
Marsh Tit		
Nuthatch	B	B
Wren	B	B
Mistle Thrush	B	B
Song Thrush	B	B
Blackbird	B	B
Robin	B	B
Blackcap	O	B
Whitethroat	O	O
Willow Warbler	O	O
Chiffchaff	O	O
Spotted Flycatcher	B	B
Hedge Sparrow	B	B
Pied Wagtail	O	O
Starling	B	B
Greenfinch	B	B
Goldfinch	O	O
Chaffinch	B	B
House Sparrow	B	B
	22	21 + 1

B — Bred

b — Probably bred

O — Observed

(With acknowledgments to the *Reports on Bird Sanctuaries in the Royal Parks*)

The falling off in the number of species observed in 1963 is probably more due to Keeper Barker no longer being on the Park staff than to the cold winter, since continuous daily observation is no longer possible. Items of particular interest are the Ring Ouzel recorded in the spring of that year, and the presence in the Park of a pair of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers in the spring and early summer of 1962 though no breeding evidence was obtained; the species was present again in the spring and autumn of 1963. Kestrels continue to appear in the Park or over it from time to time and the Treecreeper was recorded in the autumn of 1963 for the first time since 1961. Several Bullfinches appeared in the winter of 1961/62 and there were three in December, 1963. The Grey Wagtail, on the other hand, has not been recorded on passage since 1961.

TABLE 4

SPECIES OBSERVED

(cf. *L.B.R.*, 26 for 1961 : 66. Table 2)

	1962	1963
Heron	○	○
Mute Swan	○	○
Peregrine		
Kestrel	○	○
Moorhen	○	
Lapwing	○	
Snipe	○	
Woodcock	○	○
Black-headed gull	○	○
Cuckoo	○	
Swift	○	○
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	○	○
Skylark	○	
Swallow	○	○
House Martin	○	○
Jackdaw		
Magpie	○	
Long-tailed Tit		
Treecreeper		○
Fieldfare	○	○
Redwing	○	○
Ring Ouzel		○
Redstart	○	
Garden Warbler	○	○
Goldcrest	○	
Pied Flycatcher	○	○
Grey Wagtail		
Hawfinch		
Redpoll		
Bullfinch	○	○
Brambling	○	○

○ — Observed

(With acknowledgments to the *Reports on Bird Sanctuaries in the Royal Parks*)

TABLE 5

MAY CENSUS FIGURES
(cf. *L.B.R.*, 26 : 81. Table 3)

	1962	1963
Mallard	13	13
Sparrowhawk		
Stock Dove		
Wood Pigeon	63	43
	(89 Apr. 15)	(112 Apr. 6)
Feral Pigeon	28	113
	(51 Apr. 15)	(88 Apr. 6)
Tawny Owl	1	2
Swift (over)	1	1
Green Woodpecker		
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1	1
Carrion Crow	1	4
Jay	7	5
Great Tit	10	7
	(17 Apr. 15)	(17 Apr. 6)
Blue Tit	12	9
Coal Tit	2	1
Nuthatch	2	2
Wren	4	5
Mistle Thrush	1	1
Song Thrush	13	10
Blackbird	51	35
		(47 Mar. 2)
Robin	15	17
Blackcap	1	2
Willow Warbler	2	—
Spotted Flycatcher	1	—
Hedge Sparrow	19	16
	(12 Apr. 15)	(14 Apr. 6)
Pied Wagtail	1	1
Starling	59*	63*
	(38 Apr. 15)	(11 Apr. 6)
Greenfinch	2	4
	(10 Apr. 15)	
Chaffinch	2	4
	(6 Apr. 15)	
House Sparrow	68	63
	(75 Apr. 15)	(37 Apr. 6)
	380	422

* flock of 30 on
playing field

* flock of 34 on
playing field

The most notable absentee in 1963 and a possible cold weather indicator was the Goldcrest. This species is thought to be particularly susceptible to cold weather and suffered severely in 1946/47 and 1916/17 (Ticehurst and Hartley, 1948; Coward, 1920). It had been recorded annually in Holland Park on both spring and autumn passage since 1959. Long-tailed Tits were also missing in 1963, but they were missing in 1962 as well and although vulnerable their absence cannot be attributed to the weather. The Snipe record in 1962 was during the short cold spell at the beginning of January and so was the Skylark. A flock of Redwings and a few Fieldfares were present for several weeks towards the end of the 1963 cold weather but only one Brambling was recorded.

The May census figures show a further increase in the bird population of the Park though it is essential to bear in mind that these figures are only an approximation. Furthermore the Feral Pigeon and Starling figures are swollen by birds coming into the Park to feed. On the other hand there is evidence, if the Feral Pigeon figure is eliminated, that 1962 was a peak population year, the figures then being 352 for 1962 and 307 for 1963 as compared with 256 for 1961. This 1962 figure may be partly due to the mild winter and early spring of 1960/61.

The most significant figure from the point of view of the cold weather is the Wren, which shows no diminution in the number of singing males. This bird bred successfully in 1963, juveniles being seen. The Robin also maintained its numbers and the Blackbird figure, though low in May, was normal in April. The Song Thrush maintained its status well. Although the May figure for the Jay is fractionally lower than in the previous year a spring assembly of 15 birds was recorded. It is probable, however, that the number of breeding pairs in the Park was not more than two or three but nearby squares and gardens are frequented by this species and breeding has been reported from at least one of these. The preponderance of drakes is the explanation of the increase in the number of Mallard.

The Winter 1962/63

The cold weather started just before Christmas 1962 and continued until the middle of February. There was a good deal of snow in the Park and heavy frosts. A slight thaw took place on January 6th. All the ponds in the Park froze but the Park staff kept the pond on the edge of the woods broken for the birds. Much food was provided both by the public and the Park staff. The buildings must have afforded shelter and roosting places for some species, while the hollies were used for roosting by the thrush species. Very few dead birds were found during this period, other than pigeons, and there are always a certain number of these when there are a large number in the Park. A dead Chaffinch and a dead Goldfinch were reported in January, a Redwing in February and a Blackbird and two Redwings in March, the Blackbird on analysis being found to contain a considerable amount of chlorinated hydro-carbons. A sick Tawny Owl found in March recovered under the careful ministrations of the Park staff and was released.

The Effect of the Cold Weather

In view of the amount of food being distributed in the Park during the cold weather and the shelter it afforded it was not surprising that the numbers of a few species did in fact increase, the most pronounced being the Wood Pigeon. Counts carried out during this period showed a steady rise in numbers from the beginning of January, reaching a peak of about 450 at the end of the month and decreasing to about 150 by the beginning of March. There was also a large roost. During the day the Wood Pigeons appeared to be feeding on the buds on the tops of the trees, mainly on elms but on February 10th there was a flock feeding on the playing field. The first display flight with wing clap was recorded on February 14th.

The Feral Pigeons also showed an increase on the previous year, though a much smaller one, but these hardy birds had young in the nest at the end of January.

On two occasions five Carrion Crows were seen together, in other years ones and twos were the usual figures. No doubt these birds came into the Park for food. Two were watched apparently playing and bathing in the snow.

There was also a slight increase in the number of Chaffinches compared with the previous year though there was no winter flock as in 1961. These birds are relatively tame and will come for food. The first song was heard on February 14th.

A flock of Redwings appeared as the snow was melting and stayed till the beginning of March. Single birds were, however, observed during January. Some of the Redwings appeared to roost in the hollies with the Blackbirds and Song Thrushes. These birds feed in the woods as well as on the playing field.

Several species—Blue Tit, Blackbird, Robin, Hedge Sparrow, Starling and House Sparrow showed a slight diminution compared with 1962 but were similar in numbers to 1961. Some of the Blue Tits and Robins are hand tame and most are easily fed by the public. Lack (1953) considers the Robin is unaffected by cold winters where it can get human food and instances a walk near Oxford during the cold spell of January, 1945, when Robins were seen commonly round the cottages and in gardens but during three hours spent in Wytham Great Wood not one was found. A Robin was noted singing on January 27th and several were in song by February 14th. Starlings do not roost in the Park in numbers during the winter but it is used as a gathering ground for flocks going on to roost, presumably from the direction they take, on the central London buildings. A patch of bamboos which has been used as a winter roost by House Sparrows was weighed down by snow and this may have decreased the number of House Sparrows in the Park. Some Hedge Sparrows were singing by the end of January.

The most surprising factor though is probably the considerable number of species where little or no change was noted in the population, and in this connection the Wren is again probably the most significant. This bird is not known to come for food put out by the public but no doubt in a

park where to put food out during this winter often meant clearing a hole in the snow the wrens profited nevertheless. Single birds were seen from time to time during the cold weather, the first song was heard on February 10th and by the end of March up to five were in song. There is some evidence that the Wren survives cold weather better where it lives in close proximity to man than in the country. There were Wrens singing in a village in the Midlands which I visited in the spring of 1963 but there were none in a wood a short distance away, and the Holland Park figures bear this out. Presumably factors such as the uncovering of the ground, provision of roosting places, generation of a certain amount of warmth and so on operate in their case.

The Great Spotted Woodpecker was drumming on January 16th. These birds will come to bird tables in nearby gardens and may also have profited from the food put out in the Park. There has for some years only been one pair. The Jays became much tamer and four were on one occasion waiting for food to be distributed. Nuthatches, Coal Tits and Great Tits showed little or no alteration in numbers or habits. All these species will come readily for food and some of the Great Tits are hand tame. A pair of Nuthatches was courtship feeding on January 20th. The Tawny Owl also showed no change in numbers and continued to use the usual roosting places.,

The Greenfinches fluctuate from time to time. There was a small movement into the Park at the beginning of February but this has been paralleled in other years.

The Mistle Thrush showed no change. It was first heard in song on February 10th. There were slightly fewer Song Thrushes in the Park in January and February but the numbers were normal by April. The first song was heard on January 18th. Building of nests had started by the end of March. The Mallard, which is only present in the Park during the breeding season, did not return until March in 1963 as compared with February in the other years.

Conclusions

The birds were well looked after both by the general public and the Park staff and it is probable that this together with the cover and warmth provided by the type of habitat available were the principal factors in maintaining the bird population at approximately its normal level. The number of visiting Wood Pigeons increased but a majority of the species normally occupying the Park showed only a little or no change in numbers. Robin, Song Thrush and Hedge Sparrow song and Great Spotted Woodpecker drumming were all heard in January.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to all those who have assisted me in many ways and in particular to the Superintendent of Holland Park and his staff.

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Beddington Ringing Station, 1963

NINETEEN-SIXTY-THREE was a very difficult year for the Ringing Station as there are now so few of the group left. Some interest was shown by Society members towards the end of the year, but it has been difficult to arrange visits owing to other activities of group members.

Ringing was on a much reduced scale, only 349 birds being ringed, of which 109 were Swifts. A Great Crested Grebe caught and ringed early in the year was the first for the farm. Two recoveries of birds ringed at the station worthy of note were reported during the year: a starling ringed on 18th Feb., 1962, as a full-grown female was recovered at Glubokoye, Vitebsk, Belorussia S.S.R., on 20th Nov., 1962, and another ringed as a juvenile on 29th May, 1960, at Orphin, Seine et Oise, France on 15th Dec., 1963.

Despite the setbacks, the farm was fairly well watched throughout the year and especially in the autumn and winter. The severe weather at the beginning of the year was of particular interest and brought large numbers of the more common passerines, especially Redwings, maximum *c.* 5,000 on Jan. 8th, and Skylarks, *c.* 3,000 on Jan. 23rd and 25th, but Fieldfares and Bramblings were rather scarce. Several species of shore waders visited the farm at this time, and a Pink-footed Goose was seen on Jan. 6th.

A comparatively poor breeding season followed in which nearly all the nests of dyke-hole nesting tree sparrows were flooded out, but one pair and possibly a second pair of Black Redstarts bred successfully by the cooling towers.

The most interesting bird of the autumn passage was a Bluethroat on Sept. 22nd. A Chiffchaff was recorded as late as Dec. 11th. Unusual numbers of Bullfinches were seen in December, the largest single flock being 20, and during the same month Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers were seen quite frequently.

Once again our thanks must go to the farm manager, Mr. E. Hodgson, B.Sc., M.Inst.S.P., for allowing our work to continue, and also to many observers who have given us their records, particularly P. L. Chateauneuf and K. Osborne.

Book Review

INSTRUCTIONS TO YOUNG ORNITHOLOGISTS III. BIRD MIGRATION. Robert Spencer. *Museum Press*. London, 1963. 126 pages, 17 photographs, many line-drawings. Price 12s. 6d.

This well-balanced account of the mechanics of bird migration is the third of four volumes on ornithology in the Brompton Library series. Although this book is primarily intended for young people, it will be of considerable value and interest to adults, who have not had a formal education in the basic science of bird movements, and may be failing to appreciate the full significance of some of the recent discoveries in this most complicated subject.

In a most readable fashion, the author, Robert Spencer, sets out a clear picture of bird migration. He starts by defining the nature of both the regular and irregular types of movement that occur. He continues with the physiological effects on the bird of its environment, and its need to migrate, and, unfortunately, rather briefly, how the bird carries out its migrations. He describes simply the experimental evidence behind the various theories of how it finds its way. There is a chapter devoted to bird ringing, with discussion on the results of the analyses of the recoveries of some selected species. The work carried out at the bird observatories is outlined. This includes the daily census of birds present, trapping and ringing, advice on "sea-watching", and how to make and record visible migration counts, (which, of course, may be carried out almost anywhere).

The text is well supported by helpful diagrams, sketches and maps, and there are some excellent photographs—the majority by Eric Hosking. However, the "Sedge Warbler" in Plate 11 is heavily disguised as a Whinchat!

This inexpensive volume, by one of our most widely-known members, can, apart from the above-mentioned caption, be thoroughly recommended as both informative and entertaining. It would make an acceptable present (after perusal by the purchaser) for anyone who has shown an interest in the fascinating subject of the migrations of birds!

A.G.

Short Note

Manx Shearwater at Staines

On 12th September, 1963, from the Stanwell Moor Road, Staines, I saw a Manx Shearwater flying towards Staines Reservoir. It gained height slowly in an attempt to clear the high pylon cables that run alongside the road but just knocked one wing against the highest cable and was sent spiralling down still with wings held straight and stiff and landed near the road. I picked up a somewhat bewildered and terrified shearwater, took it to my works and examined it—very dark brown upperparts; white underparts; tarsus and feet pink and black, webs pink; bill dark brown to black, long and slender, hooked and tubular nostrils on top of upper mandible; length approximately 18 inches, wing span $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet. There was nothing wrong physically but the crop was empty. It was fed with cod-liver oil and fish-paste which had to be forced into its bill but once in it was readily swallowed. In the process I received some deep cuts on my finger from its hooked bill. It uttered a short harsh “krack” occasionally. When put on the ground it crouched on its tarsus full length so that its breast was touching the ground, its head nearly so.

Through the kindness of my employer, Mr. H. Herbert, arrangements were made for two people going to Havant, Sussex, to take the shearwater and release it at Selsey Bill. It was released by being thrown into the wind but landed on the beach after flying only about 200 yards. Gulls started attacking it, so it was picked up and released again, and this time it flew strongly out to sea.

My thanks are due to Mr. Herbert and others who assisted me.

J. B. Cox.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

(continued from p. 11)

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Recording Arrangements

The Society's Area is bounded by a circle of 20 miles radius centred on St. Paul's Cathedral. The recorders, whose names and addresses are given at the end of this section, welcome records from members and non-members. It will assist the speedy entering of records if the following points are observed.

1. Please enter records on the Society's record sheets, which may be obtained from the recorders, in Wetmore Order (as used in the London Bird Report). Use separate sheets for North of the Thames, South of the Thames, and Inner London, and send them to the appropriate recorder, in August for the period January to July, in November for the period August to October, and the beginning of January for November and December. Please give locality names accurately with map reference in any difficult or doubtful case.
2. Please submit copies of field notes for all species indicated below. It would greatly assist the recorders if these supporting notes were written on separate sheets of paper for each species and attached to the appropriate record sheet. If the species is one which should be considered by the *British Birds* Rarities Committee (see list in *British Birds*, Vol. 57, No. 7, July 1964, pages 280-281) please tell the recorder whether you have or will be submitting your notes to that Committee.

All rare species
 All out of season migrants
 All Divers
 Grebes other than Great Crested and Little
 All Petrels and Shearwaters
 Gannet and Shag
 Herons other than Common Heron
 All Bitterns
 Scaup, Ferruginous Duck, Long-tailed Duck
 All Geese
 Whooper and Bewick's Swans
 All birds of prey except Kestrel
 Quail
 Rails and Crakes, except Water Rail, Moorhen and Coot
 All waders of irregular occurrence, and in addition Whimbrel, Godwits, Wood Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank, Temminck's Stint, Phalaropes
 All Skuas

All Gulls of irregular occurrence including Glaucous Gull, Iceland Gull, Little Gull and Kittiwake
 Terns of irregular occurrence
 All Auks
 Collared Dove
 Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl
 Wryneck
 Willow Tit away from regular haunts
 Ring Ouzel
 Unusual Warblers
 Firecrest
 Races of *Anthus spinoletta* other than *petrosus* (Rock Pipit)
 White Wagtail in autumn
 Races of mutants of *Motacilla flava* other than typical *flavissima* (Yellow Wagtail)
 Waxwing
 Shrikes other than Red-backed Shrike
 Twite, Crossbill, Gull Bunting, Lapland Bunting, Snow Bunting

Records of the above species are currently considered by the Records Committee before being accepted for publication in the *London Bird Report*. All records published in the Systematic List must stand the scrutiny not only of readers today but also of those who may refer to the *L.B.R.* in the future, all of whom have the right to presume that records are based entirely on *correct identification supported by evidence*.

The Records Committee wish to thank all who already send in records and invite those who have not contributed to do so, thereby helping to make the *L.B.R.* a comprehensive account of the ornithology of London.

Recorders

Inner London	A. D. TOMLINS, 29 Gerard Road, Barnes, S.W.13
South of the Thames and River Thames	B. A. MARSH, 19 Grasmere Avenue, Kingston Vale, S.W.15
North of the Thames	c/o B. L. SAGE, 11 Deepdene, Potters Bar, Middx.
Bucks. and Middx.	F. M. GAUNTLETT
Essex	B. S. MEADOWS
Herts.	B. L. SAGE

Instructions for Contributors of Papers

Papers concerning the ornithology of the London Area should be submitted to the Editor, F. H. Jones, 28 Jordan Road, Greenford, Middx. not later than the end of January if they are to be considered for publication in the same year, but it would be of assistance if the Editor could be given details in advance. They should be typed if possible with double spacing and a wide margin, on one side only of quarto paper.

Scientific names should be underlined, but not headings or sub-headings. References should be listed at the end, in alphabetical order of authors' names, in the following standard form:—

MEADOWS, B. S. (1961). The Gull Roosts of the Lea Valley Reservoirs. *London Bird Report*, 25 for 1960, 56-60.

LACK, D. (1953). *Life of the Robin*. London.

The corresponding references in the text would be (Meadows, 1961) and (Lack, 1953).

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